THE NEIGHBORHOOD UNION AND THE TRANSFORMATION OF THE WEST SIDE OF ATLANTA

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A Dissertation

Presented to

The Faculty of the Department

of History

University of Houston

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In Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

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By

Brittany L. Hancock

December, 2015

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ABSTRACT

The Neighborhood Union, an African American clubwomen's association, focused its activities on the West End neighborhood of Atlanta, and worked from to 1908 to 1961 to achieve improvements in this community. Neighborhood Union members dedicated their lives to uplifting their neighborhood and used intelligent measures to fight against racial inequalities. The Neighborhood Union turned inward to solve neighborhood problems, such as the city providing only very few municipal, social, and civic services for African Americans. Neighborhood Union members solved these problems with or without the support of the white political patriarchal power structure and diligently worked to provide vocational training, child-rearing strategies, educational reform, improvements in public health, and care for neighbors during the Great Depression.

Through the Neighborhood Union's carefulness, the organization transformed the shape of the West Side of Atlanta from a run-down section of the city with few vocational courses and extracurricular activities for youth, derelict streets and schools, and few public health services, into one with hope through the creation of playgrounds and sponsoring child-centered programs, vocational training for young adults, addressing the lack of municipal services through public health campaigns, improving educational facilities, and increasing access to health services. The NU crafted strategies to improve their neighborhood and other black neighborhoods in Atlanta, despite living under an oppressive white male patriarchal structure. To create such improvements required the NU to turn both inwardly and outwardly, providing services the city failed to provide, while also reaching out to white allies and white policymakers for community improvements.

The Neighborhood Union used two community building strategies to improve their neighborhoods, the first of which included focusing its efforts on children and women. This strategy evolved from the Neighborhood Union's belief that children, as future citizens and representatives of the race, needed to learn necessary skills to effectively combat racial inequities. Their focus on women stemmed from this conviction, with the strategy being that women, as caretakers of children and the home, possessed the most direct influence on these future citizens; therefore, these women needed to receive training and skills necessary to effectively raise successful children. The Neighborhood Union's second strategy focused on teaching preventative education, designed to thwart social, personal, and health maladies before they occurred, such as the spread of disease, vice, and crime.

The Neighborhood Union's legacy is apparent throughout the modern-day West End neighborhood of Atlanta. Presently, Booker T. Washington High School, the first black high school in Atlanta and the creation of which the Neighborhood Union helped to secure, is still a publicly run school as of 2015. The Neighborhood Union's years of fighting for healthful recreation avenues for children contributed to the establishment of Washington Park, which is still in existence and located near Booker T. Washington High School. The NU also played a direct role in the formation of the Atlanta School of Social Work, now the Whitney M. Young School of Social Work at Clark Atlanta University. Finally, its most enduring legacy, the Neighborhood Union Health Center, secured during the 1950s, still serves its community at 186 Sunset Avenue. The Neighborhood Union undoubtedly changed the character of its community, fighting against an often reluctant city government to ensure for citizens and future citizens the rights to receiving education, public health, and social services. The Neighborhood Union's lasting legacy, which is still apparent in present-day Atlanta more than a century after their

efforts began, exemplifies the abilities of regular citizens to fight against oppression and inequality to bring about real and tangible changes that enduringly impact communities.

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This dissertation on the Neighborhood Union would not have come to fruition without the support and help from a number of people and institutions. The forms of support and guidance I have received include emotional, academic, and financial backing, and I am grateful to all who have helped me along during this lengthy process. Unfortunately, I cannot thank everyone who has lent an ear during times of stress, but the following individuals and institutions have invaluably helped steer this dissertation.

To begin, I owe everything I have to my Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Without Him walking beside me, I would have lacked the courage to embark upon this journey to earn my Ph.D. I know He will stay with me as I take the next steps in my academic career. Often times during this process, I felt I faced insurmountable challenges and a number of family and friends provided emotional care by offering advice and lending open ears to which I was able to vent my frustrations. I am deeply grateful for my mother and father, Laurel and Gordon Hancock, who supported me throughout my academic endeavors. Our daily phone calls lifted my spirits in difficult times, and their financial support during this process contributed to the creation and success of this project. I apologize to them for the frantic early morning wake-up calls, as we live in different time zones, but they always woke up and made themselves available to offer support and guidance. My sisters, Melanie Hancock and Ashley Saavedra have inspired me and talked me through challenging times, and to them I offer my most sincere gratitude. Moreover, I would like to express my appreciation for my extended family members, who have also unwaveringly supported me throughout my academic career. I thank my grandmother, Opal Swick, Uncle, James Swick, and Aunt and Uncle, Teresa and Stephen Hansen, for their love, compassion, and understanding.

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Additionally, several archival institutions allowed me to enter their facilities and conduct the research necessary for this dissertation. I could never have written the story of the Neighborhood Union without the information housed in these archives. I spent the majority of my research time at the Archives Research Center in the Robert W. Woodruff Library at the Atlanta University Center, to whom I extend my thanks for their time and cooperation. I personally thank Kaiyan Shabazz for his assistance during this process. In addition, much of my

research comes from the Kenan Research Center, at the Atlanta History Center, to whom I also extend my gratitude. Moreover, while its chapter did not make the final version of this manuscript, I would like to thank MARBL, the Manuscript, Archives, and Rare Book Library in the Robert W. Woodruff Library at Emory University in Atlanta, Georgia, as well.

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Again, I extend my thanks and gratitude to the preceding individuals and institutions for the hard work, dedication, and support they offered me as I undertook this work. Although the writing is mine, their contributions made this process a true group effort.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

For my Family: Gordon, Laurel, and Melanie Hancock, and Ashley, Jorge, and Camille Saavedra

Introduction

"The old saying is that a friend in need is a friend indeed."[1] This quote describing the generosity of true friendship is just one of the many expressions of gratitude that the Neighborhood Union (NU), a community building organization operated by black women in Atlanta's West End neighborhood, received from the people it helped during its over fifty years of operation during the first half of the twentieth century. This instance of appreciation came in a letter to Neighborhood Union member, Ida B. Hill, from Booker T. Washington High School student Sylvester Clark, in which he thanked her for the receipt of a coat donated to him by the organization for the upcoming winter. In his letter, the student expressed great pride in owning such a beautiful coat, and although the donation came in June, months before the next cold season, Clark relayed that he wore the coat to school the following day just to show off his new attire. The story of the NU helping this student is but one example of the countless instances in which the Neighborhood Union made a difference in the lives of its neighbors in the West End/Side community.

The Neighborhood Union formed as a result of Jim Crow, disenfranchisement, and the discrimination that plagued the lives of African Americans across the South following the Reconstruction Era. Despite these hardships, this group of African American women worked within white supremacist confines to better the community. During the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, African Americans in the South received little or no public, civic, municipal, or social services. They played little to no role in the public sphere that whites governed; therefore, black community leaders took on the responsibility of finding ways to provide these

[1] Letter to Ida B. Hill from Sylvester Clark, June 6, 1931, Neighborhood Union Collection (hereafter cited as NUC), Box 3, Atlanta University Center (hereafter cited as AUC).

much needed services. Benevolent and mutual aid societies supplied unemployment and disability relief, and the church, the cornerstone of the black community, frequently addressed the needs of the poor. As social welfare ideology progressed, this sense of community involvement paved the way for the creation of the Neighborhood Union, which would become the largest and most well-run racial uplift association in the South.[2]

The Neighborhood Union's membership consisted of some of the most prominent black women in Atlanta. Many had connections to the local black colleges located in the West Side neighborhood of the city. These women sought to carve out a livable existence for African Americans, working within the era's racial and gender hierarchies. The Neighborhood Union accomplished this by often outwitting white authorities in its interactions with them and always carefully crafting petitions that requested services without challenging racial and gendered constraints in order to enact social change. As historian Glenda Gilmore stated, black women, seen as less threatening than black men, could use their influence to efficiently access power by increasing community participation, lobbying city officials for public services, and serving as liaisons to white society.[3] The NU's method of centering its reform work on children was viewed as an acceptable outlet under the white male patriarchal system. NU clubwomen's acute understanding of their position in southern society influenced how they went about their work and enabled them to achieve some successes. During this era, black women suffered from multiple forms of oppression, with white supremacy, patriarchy, and cultural elitism all intertwining to create varying degrees of subjugation. NU clubwomen mastered fusing civil

[2] John Dittmer, *Black Georgia in the Progressive Era, 1900-1920* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1980), 52-3.
[3] Glenda Gilmore, *Gender and Jim Crow: Women and the Politics of White Supremacy in North Carolina, 1896-1920* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996), 224.

rights techniques of accommodation and direct action by working within the white power structure to further the uplift of their communities.[4]

Although the Neighborhood Union eventually expanded into all African American sections of the city, the organization achieved most of its successes in the West Side neighborhood of Atlanta, a primarily African American neighborhood due to segregation, which also housed the NU founders and local black colleges. For this dissertation, my overarching argument is that through the Neighborhood Union's diligence, the organization changed the shape of the West Side of Atlanta from a dilapidated section of the city with few vocational courses and extracurricular activities for youth, run-down streets and schools, and little to no avenues for procuring public health services, into one with hope through healthful outlets for play and vocational training, the provision of municipal services, the creation of new schools, and increased access to health care. Despite Neighborhood Union members' limitations based on their race and sex, the NU crafted strategies to improve their neighborhood and other black neighborhoods in Atlanta. To create such improvements required the NU to turn both inwardly, providing services the city failed to provide, and outwardly by reaching out to white allies and white policymakers for community improvements. Before the entrance of the Neighborhood Union into the West End, this derelict section of the city lacked the proper resources necessary for maintaining a responsible, healthy, and upright community.

The Neighborhood Union turned both inward and outward to solve community problems. They turned inward, meaning that NU women, knowing they could not depend on the city to actually provide necessary services, decided to take on the problems themselves, via the black middle class helping the black working-class. Inwardly, it provided services that the city failed to

[4] Kimberle Crenshaw, "Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence against Women of Color," *Stanford Law Review*, vol. 43, no. 6 (July 1991): 1244-5.

provide, such as finding healthful places for children to play, offering vocational courses and mother and youth oriented clubs, creating its own health center, the Neighborhood Clinic, running city-wide health campaigns, partaking in the formation of the Atlanta School of Social Work, and forming the Westside Unemployment Relief Committee to provide for neighbors devastated by the Great Depression. Outwardly, it lobbied white politicians for services and improvements in the public school system, fought political battles over educational bond monies, formed an alliance with the (white) Atlanta Anti-Tuberculosis Association (ATA) and finally, aligned with the county to form the Neighborhood Union Health Center, all activities designed to improve access to services and institutions. Through these mechanisms, the West Side dramatically improved for its residents. The Neighborhood Union created change by attacking inequalities and attempting to elevate the race through behavioral modification, institution building, enacting measures to improve public health, and, although less effectively (due to not being able to keep up with the demands of inordinate numbers of people needing assistance), combatting the Great Depression.

These clubwomen's status as members of the black middle-class is an important factor that enabled them to achieve these changes. Their black middle-class status afforded them the ability to possess the opportunities needed in order to enacting meaningful change. The middle-class status of these women offered them the time needed to successfully carry out the organization's activities, since many of the married NU women had husbands who possessed the financial resources to allow their wives to focus on endeavors other than employment. Moreover, as a result of their class status, these women had less responsibilities at home, since many NU women had housekeepers or nannies to do that work for them. These privileged circumstances allowed Neighborhood Union members the time to pursue their social work extra-curricular

activities. Despite their advantaged status, Neighborhood Union women, however, still faced the societal limitations based on race and sex that existed during the early twentieth century. These limitations impeded their activities, as, for example, lacking the right to vote made it virtually impossible to sway politics and public policy, causing black women to face hurdles unique to their sex and race. Although white women followed similar strategies, they possessed more indirect power and influence through their abilities to convince their husbands to vote for measures important to women and children. Aside from special and local elections, black women did not have this option. White women and African Americans of both sexes had little say in municipal, civic, and political decision-making processes. Black women, disenfranchised through both racism and sexism, had the most marginal political voice. White women and black men, although affected by white patriarchy, still possessed more power than black women, since they suffered discrimination through either race or gender, whereas African American women experienced prejudice through *both* racism and sexism. Thus, as historian and feminist scholar bell hooks has amply demonstrated, racism and sexism are inextricably linked because they intersect to create varying degrees of oppression.[5] Focusing their social work and reform efforts on women and children allowed black women access into social, political, and civic spheres previously reserved for white men.

Even with these limitations, the NU accomplished much to benefit the West End, by navigating the avenues of the reluctant white male power structure by crafting its requests for services to be ones that would benefit both white and black Atlantans. The Neighborhood Union's understanding of how to prey on white's fears of black immorality, crime, and disease also helped the organization to achieve its goals, some of which they accomplished through

[5] See: bell hooks, *Ain't I A Woman: Black Women and Feminism* (Boston: South End Press, 1981).

petitioning city officials for public amenities that the black community desperately needed, but would serve the entire city as well.

Though the Neighborhood Union's activities directly transformed the West Side of Atlanta into one with expanded social and municipal services and the establishment of institutions, the organization did not actually have this big picture in mind when it set out to help the neighborhood's black population; in actuality, NU members, primarily focused on community building to help improve conditions in the West End, though ultimately, they achieved so much more than what they intended. The NU attempted to unite the community through racial uplift activities and events, providing for needy residents, supplying lessons and courses on home, health, and educational improvements, and teaching effective homemaking techniques such as knowledge about caring for the sick and elderly. The initial impetus for founding the Neighborhood Union centered on getting to know neighbors better, as a result of a shared feeling of guilt regarding the death of a lonely neighbor in need. These clubwomen resolved to take on the responsibility of caring for the community to ensure that pressing needs of the neighborhoods residents did not go unanswered. It sought to learn the needs (often through the practice of surveying) of the community and address them by encouraging the neighborhood to rally behind its doctrines and programs. Throughout the years, its attempts, successes, and even failures all led to achievements that subsequently improved the quality of life and access to social, civic, and municipal services for the West End community.

The Neighborhood Union exceeded its own expectations, and the popularity of the movement, both through NU membership and the responses from the people it sought to help, brought about dramatic changes to the West End community. The Neighborhood Union's focus on community improvements brought attention to the organization, both in black and white

society, resulting in the NU becoming more inventive in its strategies for community improvement. Throughout the years, its attempts, successes, and even failures all led to achievements that subsequently improved the quality of life and access to social, civic, and municipal services in the community. Though the Neighborhood Union obtained many successes, it also experienced many failures. Even its failures, however, served to help the movement as they often drew attention to NU causes, via reviews and articles from the mainstream press to educate the public about NU programs. Additionally, its unsuccessful attempts to bring about change still often afforded the NU the opportunity to strengthen relationships with those in power, through the brushing of shoulders with policy-makers and, in later years, aligning with twice-mayor, James L. Key, with whom the Union developed a strong relationship through its constant petitions and requests for services. Additionally, the Neighborhood Union became more inventive in its efforts than its founders originally envisioned when founded. The NU worked within the boundaries of white supremacy, gaining access to white male politicians through reasonable means, by appealing to white leaders by making requests that would not only benefit black Atlantans, but white Atlantans as well. One method for achieving these changes for both races was the Neighborhood Union teaming up with the white-led Atlanta Anti-Tuberculosis Association, which centered on preventing, treating, and curing tuberculosis. The backing of this influential organization expanded the NU's power and access to white politicians and municipal services. Other examples of the NU's activism include its role during two special elections (in which African Americans possessed the vote), where black men and women became the defining voting bloc for education bonds.[6]

[6] Judson, "Building the New South City," 214-33.

A primary strategy used by the Neighborhood Union to attain its goals included enacting change by focusing its efforts on black women (whom the NU considered caregivers of the next generation/future of the race) and children. NU members hoped that this combined focus on women and children would help to create future, upright black citizens possessing the skills needed to successfully fight white oppression, and therefore, bring about improved conditions for the race. This strategy mirrored that of white clubwomen, who also focused on (white) women and children, but with goals that differed from those of the NU. White clubwomen sought improvements for the most vulnerable groups of society, while the NU believed a women and child-centered focus, also would provide for the neediest groups, but would expand the black middle-class and improve race relations for the next generation. During the nadir of race relations, transforming white patriarchal society remained infeasible, especially after the deadly Atlanta Race Riot of 1906, but NU clubwomen believed rearing confident, intelligent, responsible future adults would contribute to improved race relations and the availability of more services for African Americans.

The organization's primary focus on women and children led to the provision of services for the community, which the organization turned inward to achieve in order to provide for the community when the city refused assistance. Specifically, the NU supplied classes and clubs for women and children to teach educative, upright activities. The Neighborhood Union provided these activities intending to offer opportunities for employment, improve homemaking skills, and provide healthful outlets for children inside and outside the classroom. In addition to turning inward to lead activities the city failed to provide, it fought for improvements in the public school system, and an expansion of public health services with children serving as important allies in the fight for communal health.

More effective and far-reaching, the NU provided their community with the municipal and public health services that the city denied. When the city refused the association's recommendations, such as providing street lights or police protection, the organization took control of providing community services, such as conducting a neighborhood watch committee. The Neighborhood Union turned inward to solve community problems that the city ignored. Regarding public health, the Neighborhood Union procured the services of local black doctors, nurses, and dentists to volunteer in the organizations during public health campaigns and at the Neighborhood Clinic, in response to the city offering few public health services for black Atlantans. In this same vein, the NU convinced the community to partake in health measures, such as Clean-up Week and National Negro Health Week. The situation in Atlanta reflected the situation of other southern cities, who also denied social, municipal, and civic services to black communities throughout the early twentieth century. Through assuming responsibility for these denied or limited services, the NU challenged stereotypes, improved its communities, and demonstrated that the government's reluctance to provide necessary funding and services for blacks resulted from malfeasance, indolence, and anxiety over the maintenance of white supremacy.[7]

Another of the Neighborhood Union's strategies for community building that brought about substantial changes to the West Side of Atlanta involved the Neighborhood Union's elevation of the race by infusing preventative education into every facet of its platform. Preventative education consisted of lessons aimed to stop social, educational, and health maladies before they came to fruition. Instead of curing problems already occurring, the NU centered its education on improving race relations by creating avenues to deter individuals from

[7] Leon F. Litwack, *Trouble in Mind: Black Southerners in the Age of Jim Crow* (New York: Vintage Books, 1998), 101.

vice, crime, or poor health. The NU believed mothers in the home and children and teachers in schools as the fastest vehicles for spreading its preventative message. Through educative activities designed to improve caretaking skills, discover the most pressing needs of residents with the intent on remedying them, and improve the overall health of the community, the Neighborhood Union took steps to ensure racial progress. By using a fusion of gendered notions of proper motherhood and preventative education, the NU believed it had found the remedy for eliminating racial subjugation and community improvement.

Several Atlanta archival collections are the sources for this examination of the Neighborhood Union. Most are specific records from organizations and individuals involved in some capacity with the NU. The most useful and pertinent resource for this study is the Neighborhood Union Collection, located at the Atlanta University Center in the West Side neighborhood of Atlanta. This collection consists of the association's meticulous records of their day-to-day activities and includes a wealth of materials: meeting minutes, surveys, various committee reports, financial records, and newspaper clippings. The Atlanta University Center also houses the John and Lugenia Burns Hope Collection, the Commission on Interracial Cooperation Collection, and Atlanta University Presidential Records, significantly, John Hope's, husband of NU founder Lugenia Hope, all of which are important sources that contribute to this examination of the Neighborhood Union.

The Atlanta History Center, located in the Buckhead region of Atlanta, also contributes to this dissertation. The Atlanta Lung Association Collection provides important insight into the functioning of the Atlanta Anti-Tuberculosis Association, which is essential to this examination, since it is an organization the NU remained affiliated with for decades. Central to this analysis is a detailed study of Atlanta City Records from 1919 to 1932. Although this study ends in 1961,

no City Records are used after 1932, although letters from the Fulton County Board of Health are included in the Epilogue. Many historians have documented the NU's relationship with the City of Atlanta, yet no one has examined this affiliation while including analyses about the city's standpoint. I will provide a multi-pronged investigation of the city's connection with the NU through a study of City Council Records.

Several newspapers and periodicals also guide this work. Articles from both the black and white press are cited to demonstrate the positions of various groups, individuals, and communities. For example, the *Atlanta Constitution*, a widely read newspaper from the mainstream press, often supported Neighborhood Union campaigns and provided needed publicity. White hysteria over tuberculosis and racial stereotypes regarding its transmission are also well-documented in these press records. The black Atlanta weekly periodical, *Atlanta Independent* (later *Atlanta World)*, provides information from and for the black community. Finally, the *Spelman Messenger* cites information and opinions from Spelman Seminary (later College), students and graduates.

Several historians have written journal articles or book chapters about the Neighborhood Union, yet none to date have written a complete monograph on the organization. I will make my contribution to the field by completing the currently unfinished story of the Neighborhood Union. Those who have previously studied the NU, or other black clubwomen, have focused on specific thematic successes or broad narratives of the associations. While these sources have greatly contributed to clubwomen scholarship and expanded our understanding of the NU, a thorough, detailed investigation is missing. I will begin the Neighborhood Union's story in 1899, the year founder Lugenia Hope attended a child welfare conference at Atlanta Baptist University, and conclude in 1961, discussing the last known records of the association.

Historians have previously produced studies on a number of issues relevant to my examination of the Neighborhood Union. Several monographs address how the intersections of race, class, and gender affects Southerners and race relations, both in the past and present. The analyses of previous scholars' work directly influences an understanding of the Neighborhood Union, and these previous investigations help complete this dissertation. While some authors have created key theories represented in the NU's message, others have provided critical background information that shapes my knowledge of the topic.

The most thorough investigation to date of the Neighborhood Union is made by historian Sarah Judson in her unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, "Building the New South City: African American and White Clubwomen in Atlanta, 1895-1930" (1997). While not exclusively a study of the NU, Judson's paper offered a comparative investigation of the Neighborhood Union with several local white voluntary associations, centering her analysis of how each group perceived citizenship. According to Judson, both black and white clubwomen changed perceptions of citizenship by emphasizing the importance of family, middle-class standards of proper behavior, and social mobility.[8] She contended that southern social structures and hierarchies still existed, but allowed for new possibilities for cooperation and inclusion. Before segregation became entrenched in southern society, in the nineteenth century, black and white women frequently worked together in the temperance, abolitionist, and suffrage campaigns. White middle-class women interpreted rights of citizenship as being dependent on gender, race, and class. They challenged the dominant white male construction of citizenship and demanded access to political and social power through indirect measures. White women frequently contended that their race and class mandated civic and political authority and denigrated blacks and lower-class whites as

[8] Judson, "Building the New South City," 1.

a result. Black clubwomen, however, viewed citizenship as a right for everyone, including African American women and the poor. Instead of directly challenging the white male power structure, they instead tried to influence politics and obtain services using more discreet methods than white clubwomen.

Although this study examines how the Neighborhood Union instilled citizenship into the community, my analysis includes a more gendered focus than Judson's study of the NU. Judson, like many historians before her, concluded that black clubwomen considered race work their primary goal. I contend that working for racial advancement affected the entire community, and subsequently "gendered uplift," as I label it in chapter one, became a secondary objective in the early period of the NU's existence. "Gendered uplift" refers to improving conditions for the race by focusing preventative educative efforts on women and girls, because of a belief that mothers and future mothers are the fastest vehicles for bringing about improvements in race relations. Over time, it expanded into other avenues, such as formal education and public health, and as Victorian values dissipated, the NU shifted from a girl and young woman-centered focus to one that centered on a responsibility for all black people, especially children.

The most influential source studied in this examination is Glenda Gilmore's *Gender and Jim Crow: Women and the Politics of White Supremacy in North Carolina, 1896-1920* (1996), which helps to shape this study of the Neighborhood Union in Atlanta. With her analysis of black clubwomen, Gilmore described how race, class, and gender intersected throughout various North Carolinians' lives and how it affected their roles as political actors. Much like the women of the NU, black clubwomen in North Carolina served as liaisons to the white community: they increased community participation through their influence, lobbied city officials for public services, and served as mediators for interracial contacts. Gilmore argued that African American

women, although lacking the power to vote prior to 1920, exercised an indirect role in politics. Gilmore explained that by maneuvering their way around social, racial, and political hierarchies, African American women achieved a measure of license which has only recently found its way into historical examinations of the South. She contended, black women lacked the ability to end racism, but found ways to exercise power within a white male patriarchal system designed to strip them of any power or authority.[9]

Other monographs have provided crucial background information about the Neighborhood Union and other female-led voluntary associations. Jacqueline Rouse's 1989 biography, *Lugenia Burns Hope: Black Southern Reformer*, described Lugenia Hope's (the founder of the NU) lifelong, unwavering commitment to improving the lives of African Americans. Rouse's biography provides a wealth of information about Hope, but only offers one chapter on the NU itself (an association to which she dedicated twenty-nine years of her life).[10] Furthering the work detailed in Rouse's biography, this dissertation provides an in-depth examination of Hope's role in the NU and highlights Hope's close relationship with other organizations that similarly focused on home life, civic duties, and public health.

Education and female-led voluntary associations are directly linked, as universities often provided training grounds for social service and club work. Emphasizing this dual relationship, Cynthia Neverdon-Morton examined African American women living in five Southern locations in *Afro-American Women of the South and the Advancement of the Race, 1895-1925* (1989). The author touches upon my topic of clubwomen by placing emphasis on formal and informal

[9] Gilmore, *Gender and Jim Crow*, 224.
[10] Jacqueline Rouse, *Lugenia Burns Hope: Black Southern Reformer* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1989), 57-90.

education, stating that all planned social service activities included educative platforms.[11] The Neighborhood Union took education one step further, by implanting preventative education tactics in all aspects of their message. Neverdon-Morton's focus, however, examined collegiate education and how it created a network of social service workers dedicated to advancement, while my study centers more on voluntary, untrained social service.

Similar to my study, through her investigation of black women professional workers, Stephanie Shaw described the linked relationships of family, community, and formal education in *What a Woman Ought to Be and to Do: Black Professional Women Workers During the Jim Crow Era* (1996). She argued that fusing together the three imbued women with a sense of "socially responsible individualism:" concern for advancing one's own position, while also bearing responsible for the well-being of their communities.[12] Shaw investigated the role of black female professionals in the South; although not professionals, NU members fit with this cohort, as they as performed similar social work (though not for pay) until the professionalization of black social work in Atlanta occurred in the 1920s. Shaw comes close to fully dissecting the core components necessary for racial progress, yet falls short of fully examining the combination of traditional education, domestic education, and sanitary education, which still needs exploration.

Although black women served as the pillars of the community, patriarchal gender norms sometimes hid their accomplishments from the public eye. Despite men holding top leadership positions in social organizations and clubs, women completely ran the NU, with many serving on the Board of Directors. In keeping with this theme, in *Sick and Tired of Being Sick and Tired:*

[11] Cynthia Neverdon-Morton, *Afro-American Women of the South and the Advancement of the Race, 1895-1925* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1989), 6.
[12] Stephanie Shaw, *What a Woman Ought to Be and to Do: Black Professional Women Workers During the Jim Crow Era* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press,1996), 2.

Black Women's Health Activism in America, 1890-1950 (1995), Susan Smith argued that while men possessed management titles in racial organizations, women primarily worked as grassroots organizers, and their work as such persisted from the Progressive Era to the Modern Civil Rights Period.[13] The author also highlights black women's public health activism in the clubwomen's movement throughout the South, including the Tuskegee Woman's Club of Alabama, which focused on rural health relief for individuals lacking effective social health services, and the impact of midwives in rural Mississippi. Smith effectively demonstrates that white Southerners' reluctance to provide health services to African Americans resulted from fears that providing them would strip whites of their dominance over blacks, but that fears of contamination forced whites to take eventually take action and provide these services. As a result, black southern women played to white's fears and stereotypes of African Americans in order to obtain services and better the health of their communities.[14]

Although this examination specifically discusses African American women's activism in Atlanta, in order to fully understand the activist environment in which the NU's activity took place, it is important to understand the clubwomen movement in the white community as well. Anne Firor Scott's *Natural Allies: Women's Associations in American History* (1992) contended that since the conclusion of the Revolutionary War, women have organized and rallied behind issues concerning them. While limited politically and socially by their sex and denied access to politics and major institutions, white women carved a space in the public sphere through voluntary associations, redefining traditional notions of women's proper place. By working with

[13]Susan Smith, *Sick and Tired of Being Sick and Tired: Black Women's Health Activism in America* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1995), 1.
[14]Tera Hunter, *To 'Joy My Freedom: Southern Black Women's Lives and Labors After the Civil War* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1997), 198-213; Sarah Judson, "Civil Rights and Civic Health: African American Women's Public Health Work in Early Twentieth-Century Atlanta," NWSA Journal, Vol. 11, No. 3, (Autumn, 1999): 97.

these organizations, white women learned useful skills, such as handling money, speaking in public, and gaining an indirect role in politics, through the influencing of politicians via their husbands (as voters). In addition, much like the Neighborhood Union's method of petitioning the City Council and Board of Education and forming alliances with other associations for desperately needed services, white clubwomen stepped into the public sphere to fight for these services.

Another look at white clubwomen discussed the Domestic Feminism movement of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Specifically, Karen Blair's *The Clubwoman as Feminist: True Womanhood Redefined, 1868-1914* (1980) examined how literary clubs fostered camaraderie between its members, allowing them the strength to band together to address problems in the public sphere. Blair also highlighted how clubs, meant for middle-class women only, adhered to policies involving proper behavior, and the consideration of each member as ladies. These ladies simultaneously accepted and rejected their positions in the private sphere, seeking male allies and justifying their maternalism, focusing on one's own and society's children, as an avenue into politics. Knowledge of white women's activism is necessary to understand the coming of the Neighborhood Union, as white clubwomen's associations date back to the antebellum period, and much of early black women's activism mirrored activities among the white middle-class.

Regarding black women's activism, specifically in the settlement house movement, Elisabeth Lasch-Quinn's *Black Neighbors: Race and the Limits of Reform in the American Settlement House Movement, 1890-1945* (1993), provided an expanded version of the settlement house movement to include southern black Progressives and highlighted various African American settlement projects throughout the South. Typically, scholarship on settlement houses

has focused on immigrants in the Northeast and Midwest and by amending their behaviors and providing social services. She discussed the Calhoun School in Lowndes County, Alabama, which combined both traditional and vocational education into its settlement work. Another settlement house in Mt. Meigs, Alabama, offered traditional and vocational training, but also ran a community center, a YMCA, and made provisions for the elderly. Focusing on the emergence of other clubwomen's efforts demonstrates that the Neighborhood Union, while possessing unique strategies, was only one of many women's groups working for the benefit of black Southerners.

As will be discussed in this paper examining the Neighborhood Union, white Atlantans experienced hysteria over the spread of communicable diseases, most notably tuberculosis, which is well documented in Tera Hunter's *To 'Joy My Freedom: Southern Lives and Labors after the Civil War* (1997). In this work, Hunter investigated the lives of black working-class women in the South from the Civil War until World War I. Hunter convincingly contended that black women sought to obtain autonomy, control over their bodies, and self-reliance while working within (and occasionally outside) the boundaries of white supremacy. Her ninth chapter, "Tuberculosis as a 'Negro Servants' Disease,'" covers the 1910s, when tuberculosis hysteria swept across white Atlanta, and black domestics received blame for allegedly spreading this disease to the white community.[15] This chapter explains that city officials raided black homes, searching for evidence of disease, and proposed several stringent measures to regulate the movement of domestics in attempts to curb disease transmission. These regulations attempted to give whites control of black women's bodies and mobility. The NU countered whites' argument blaming blacks for transmitting disease, arguing that neglect of sanitation services in their

[15] Tera Hunter, *To 'Joy My Freedom: Southern Black Women's Lives and Labors After the Civil War* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1997), 187-218.

neighborhoods, not innate filth, was the true cause of TB. The NU's solution came through preventative education measures, such as active participation in the public schools, canvassing neighborhoods, and conducting clean-up campaigns, all of which worked toward the prevention of TB and other maladies. A look into how NU members exploited white fears to work with the Atlanta Anti-Tuberculosis Association, obtain municipal services, raise support for black schools, and gain political access to the white male power structure is discussed in chapters two and three of this examination.

The first chapter of my study of NU clubwomen will provide historical context for the era in which the Neighborhood Union operated. Chapter one will highlight the Atlanta Race Riot of 1906, the subsequent disenfranchisement of black men, and the election of Governor Hoke Smith. The powerlessness of black men during the "nadir" of race relations required black women, viewed by whites as less threatening, to step into informal leadership roles for their respective communities.[16] This chapter argues that the Neighborhood Union centered its efforts on community building through behavioral modification and forming relationships with neighbors through the NU's ever-present strategy of surveying neighborhoods. In addition, the NU attempted to fill a void in the black community, by working as volunteer social workers until the professionalization of black social work in Atlanta in 1920. The Neighborhood Union forced an agenda on the West Side despite limitations based on members' race and sex in a white male patriarchal society. Chapter one also addresses the formation of the Neighborhood Union and its early activities for racial uplift, leading to the first steps that improved the West End. As a community building organization, the NU sought to improve relations with neighbors and to grow a sense of solidarity among the residents. The Neighborhood Union believed that providing

[16] Rayford W. Logan, *The Betrayal of the Negro" From Rutherford B. Hayes to Woodrow Wilson* (New York: Collier Books, 1954), 88-104.

mothers with home education and providing healthful outlets for children, mainly girls, such as extracurricular activities and vocational training would improve relations in the home and a child-centered focus would result in racial uplift of the next generation. Eventually, the Neighborhood Union would extend its leadership into institution building, but the early years of the NU focused on elevating the race by uplifting mothers and young girls: caregivers in the home and future mothers who would possess skills for both the public and private sphere.

During a period where racial violence, lynchings, and disenfranchisement proliferated, the NU believed that rising womanhood and girlhood to a new standard would result in the most effective gains for the community. This chapter highlights the early efforts of the NU to transform the community by providing clubs and activities for women and girls to instill behavioral modification, teach employment skills, and find wholesome extra-curricular outlets for girls. In the early period of the NU's existence, when Victorian standards of proper behavior between the sexes remained prominent, the NU focused its efforts on women and girls, using "gendered uplift" strategies. Shaping morally conscious, educated, and socially active women and girls became the Union's central focus for improving race relations in the NU's early period. In its efforts to accomplish this goal, the NU believed that reaching the next generation resulted in rising womanhood and girlhood to higher standards. The NU, while fighting to improve conditions for black Atlanta, harnessed gendered uplift as a weapon of resistance, designed to shape the next generation into educated, outspoken, and dedicated women who would combat racial stereotypes and fight for civic, political, and economic advancement. First generation NU members believed they had created the foundation that future generations of black women would build upon to become prosperous. By improving home life through mothers and finding healthful activities for children (primarily girls), the NU believed that the neighborhood would see vast

improvements in both the public and private spheres. Preventative education retained its place as an NU goal, but members believed that the elevation of women and girls would set them on paths to citizenship and middle-class behaviors.

The second chapter of this examination of the Neighborhood Union discusses the predominance of the value of public education in the NU's platform for racial uplift. The Neighborhood Union turned outwardly, appealing to politicians through petitioning to improve the black public school system. This chapter contends that the Neighborhood Union's risky strategy of directly confronting white policymakers produced mixed results. It achieved some successes, such as the creation of new schools, but other times members' voices went unheard. Its dedication to transforming opportunities for black youth paid some dividends, the NU also experienced many failures. These failures had indirect gains, such as forming relationships with white policymakers, receiving attention in the *Atlanta Constitution* (the mainstream, white press), and piquing the interest of both the black community and sympathetic whites about the poor conditions of black schools. Although it did not achieve all of its goals, the NU helped bring about the establishment of six new schools (five after a 1921 bond election) and an increase in teachers' salaries. The Neighborhood Union, along with its sub-organization, the Women's Social Improvement Committee (which will be discussed at length in chapter two), fought for improvements in the public school system, with the intent of using the sub-organization to motivate white politicians into action by instilling the fear into them that inadequate and unsanitary educational facilities for black youth contributed to crime and disease. While the WSIC eventually disbanded, its petitions, visits to those in power, and documentation (photographing, etc.) of the squalid conditions in which black children learned, brought some gains to the community. Unfortunately, the massive overcrowding present in Atlanta's black

schools received no attention from the white power structure, with the problem eventually worsening as rural migrants congested southern cities, including Atlanta.

Chapter two also discusses the Neighborhood Union's borrowing of W.E.B. DuBois' concept of the "Talented Tenth," a term used to describe an idea in which members of this group consisted of the educated top tier of black society that would lead the black community by example. The NU believed that creating educational and learning opportunities for black youth would give them the ability to join the Talented Tenth, and as a result, black youth would be better prepared to tackle white supremacy. This second chapter also further examines the NU's support for black education by discussing African Americans using their political clout to stymy politicians who refused to provide funding for black schools; specifically, the chapter will study the Neighborhood Union's role in defeating a 1919 bond, and its influence in the passage of a 1921 bond that allocated a substantial amount of money for black schools. This chapter also includes discussion on the background of the city of Atlanta's attitudes toward black education, racial inequalities in schools, and the fundamental link between education and southern blacks' conception of freedom. Adult literacy classes also receive attention in this chapter. Finally, a discussion of statistics on black and white education from the 1930 Census and a review of a 1937 Georgia Teachers and Educational Association report highlighting inequalities in education completes this chapter.

The third chapter investigates the Neighborhood Union's role in improving the physical conditions of African American citizens and its accompanying public health campaigns. Of all NU platforms and programs, the organization obtained the most success and impacted the most people, especially in the West End, by expanding access to health care for the residents. This chapter argues that the Neighborhood Union turned both inward and outward for the

improvement of public health for black residents. From its inception, it turned inward to provide services the city did not, such as teaching lessons on how to properly care and bathe the sick, forming the Neighborhood Clinic in 1908, and procuring the services of black doctors and nurses to volunteer at its facility. Outwardly, the NU aligned with the Atlanta Anti-Tuberculosis Association as early as 1908, increasing access to public health funds and resources, TB dispensaries and clinics for African Americans, and increasing participation with white politicians. Through its adaptability, the NU dramatically altered black access to health care, in both the West End, and other black neighborhoods in the city. The significant changes the NU helped to bring about dramatically improved public health and access to health care in the neighborhood and through preventative education, preventing many diseases before they occurred.

Chapter three documents the close relationship between the NU and the Atlanta Anti-Tuberculosis Association. Through turning inward to help themselves when the city would not step in, as exampled by the NU's maintenance of the Neighborhood Clinic, and turning outward by working with the ATA, the Neighborhood Union brought substantial changes both to the provision of health care, and its ability to sway its neighbors into taking an active interest in personal and familial health. Chapter three also highlights the necessity of black public health workers to the NU's cause due to African Americans strongly distrusting white public health professionals; because of these black public health workers, a higher percentage of African Americans sought healthcare at either the Neighborhood Clinic or at ATA dispensaries and clinics. Chapter three provides further discussion on the Union's preventative education platform, which primarily aimed to stop the spread of communicable diseases, notably tuberculosis, but a wide variety of other health problems as well. The backbone of the

Neighborhood Union's preventative message concerned educating the masses about the prevention, not the cure, of disease. The idea of creating a healthy citizenry during a period where the city and state governments provided almost no health services for blacks remained a central goal of the Neighborhood Union until the very end of its existence in 1961.

Chapter four continues the argument presented in chapter three that the NU strove to build the community by improving public health via preventative education and other public health campaigns. In this chapter I argue that the NU achieved the most success during its 1920s public health campaigns, by centering on children as messengers, advocates, and participants in various public health campaigns that led to tangible gains for the West End. Through the positive changes made, the city took notice and finally began to provide (although minimal), municipal services, including new sewers. In addition, after years of public health campaigns, the 1920s proved most successful because of interracial cooperation with white organizations and policymakers, such as the Chamber of Commerce, Red Cross, and the Department of the Interior. This chapter is unique, as it details activities of the NU and ATA during the 1920s, a period previously neglected by historians. Examining the 1920s is essential to the study of the NU, as it is the decade in which the ATA and NU exercised their most influence and power; it is during this time that these organizations made their greatest strides toward improving health and providing education about the prevention of disease. The Neighborhood Union most effectively addressed the public health needs of the West End, and other black neighborhoods during its 1920s health campaigns. The organizations accomplished this work using two recognizable strategies: prevention through education and focusing on children as future citizens. The NU's ever present practice of achieving prevention through education served as both associations' key strategy, becoming their most useful educational tactic. This chapter will discuss how children

became the key to improving public health in the West End, as their enthusiasm, ability to sway others, and heavy participation in public health campaigns beautified their neighborhoods and spread public health messages, including the importance of hygiene and disease prevention to their families and others. In addition, the rising number of children receiving clinical care during this time period demonstrates the influence children had on the public health movement, showing that these children successfully persuaded their parents in to take them in for check-ups and treatment. The successful 1920s NU/ATA public health campaigns could not have achieved such recognition and communal participation without the active role of children.

Chapter five examines the NU's attempt during the Herbert Hoover years of the Great Depression to alleviate suffering for the West End community, exemplified through a discussion of the West Side Unemployment Relief Committee (WURC), an organization created in 1931 by the NU to aid black Atlantans. In this chapter, I contend that WURC represented the final attempt of the NU to uplift the community and bring about significant change, by addressing the effect the Great Depression had on the residents of the West End. To accomplish this, WURC attempted to model some aspects of the Family Welfare Society for the West End, the sole city-run agency handling relief measures which directed relief to whites first. WURC also diverged from the Family Welfare Society, using new tactics, such as fundraising, and convincing financially-better off neighbors to supply employment for needier members of the community. WURC strove to provide employment assistance, use the Neighborhood Clinic, and hand out cloth, fuel, food, and other necessities to neighbors in need. The Neighborhood Union, under the auspices of WURC, attempted to relieve West Side of Atlanta by providing both permanent relief (employment) and temporary relief measures (food and clothing donations, etc.). In addition, WURC focused solely on the West End of Atlanta, while other uplift strategies targeted

blacks in all neighborhoods. This chapter demonstrates the limitations of the Neighborhood Union. Although it tried to transform the lives of its neighbors suffering from the Great Depression, the need was too great, and WURC could not provide relief for enough people; Though not as effective as hoped, the establishment of WURC to carry out anti-poverty activities represented one the NU's final efforts to attack despair in the West End. The Neighborhood Union's WURC, a pre-New Deal welfare association, which both extended the NU's previous work and further underscored the necessity for public aid, disintegrated after Atlanta's Community Chest interfered in WURC activities and lobbied for the committee to be disbanded.

This study of the Neighborhood Union's effect on the West End community concludes by examining the waning influence of the NU due to intrusions by Atlanta's Urban League and Community Chest. In addition, on the eve of the New Deal, when social welfare agencies (some created for the first time) flourished, the Neighborhood Union's focus on settlement work came to represent an antiquated vision of social welfare, helping to further the organization's demise. During this time, the country saw a nationwide movement toward the dissolution of black clubwomen's efforts, and new programs and controversies also diminished the role of the Neighborhood Union and its impact on community building. Despite these limitations, the Neighborhood Union remained active in less direct ways, and the organization existed until at least 1961, with members serving until either old age or their deaths.

Finally, an epilogue completes the story of the Neighborhood Union and covers the formation of the Neighborhood Union Health Center in the 1950s. The Neighborhood Union's legacy is prevalent throughout Atlanta's West End. People can visit Booker T. Washington High School, Washington Park, and the Neighborhood Union Health Center to this day, all of which are locations that the NU played a role in establishing. In addition, the Atlanta School of Social

Work, another institution the NU had a direct hand in forming, is now the Whitney M. Young School of Social Work at Clark Atlanta University. By helping to establish these institutions that still exist in present-day Atlanta, over a century after their founding, the Neighborhood Union's legacy lives on in the West End of Atlanta.

Chapter One
'Thy Neighbor as Thyself:'
The Formation of the Neighborhood Union and Early Uplift Activities

What are some of the causes of grassroots activism? What causes average citizens at the local level to take on public roles in a community? Is it because of long-simmering problems or is it because of immediate crises? This chapter will examine the case of the Neighborhood Union (NU), an organization of middle-class, African American women with connections to local colleges in Atlanta, Georgia, as a discussion of this organization provides a perfect opportunity to address these questions. The NU's founding members, Lugenia Hope, Hattie Watson, and Dora B. Whitaker, had these connections and proved integral to the creation of this important uplift organization within the African American community. Each of these women possessed a drive to uplift their communities into ones that could thrive, even under the oppressive white male patriarchal structure that dominated during their lifetimes.

In early twentieth century Atlanta, despite the long established system of white male patriarchy that oppressed the black community, until the Atlanta Race Riot of 1906, the African American community expended minimal collective effort to address the systematic racism pervading southern society: the source of its oppression. On September 22, 1906, violence ensued in Atlanta, stemming from political tensions over the Georgia gubernatorial race. This riot began near the center of the city, where, according to C.B. Wilmer of the Commission on Interracial Cooperation, "'at Five Points and various other nearby corners white men and boys began to attack Negroes by throwing rocks and sticks through the windows of street cars on which Negro men were riding and Negro boys were also included in the general attack.'"[17] The

[17] C.B. Wilmer, "Story of the Atlanta Race Riot of 1906," Commission on Interracial Cooperation, n.d., Reel 19, Atlanta University Center (hereafter referred to as AUC0, 6.

Atlanta Race Riot resulted from a vicious gubernatorial primary campaign between former *Atlanta Journal* publisher, Hoke Smith, and *Atlanta Constitution* editor, Clark Howell.[18] Both men represented the Democratic Party, and in the one-party South, the victor in that contest became the state's next governor. Additionally, Smith and Howell supported disenfranchisement and segregation of the races in their campaigns and perpetuated early twentieth century African American stereotypes, playing to the white community's common fear that blacks would advance socioeconomically and gain control of the South if empowered to vote; both candidates' views on the issue of interracial sex, however, led to the campaign's dangerous turn, resulting in the Atlanta Race Riot.[19] Smith and Howell asserted that African American men possessing the right to vote would subsequently lead to the demand for "social equality," a synonym for miscegenation in the early twentieth century American South—claims that inflamed white southerners' fears about their African American neighbors. A vicious news story, printed on September 22, 1906, claimed that four sexual assaults occurred on white women in one day, inciting white outrage.[20]

This article initiated the violence, and by ten o'clock that night, the Atlanta Race Riot broke out in downtown Atlanta, with a group of white newsboys beginning the attack and senselessly beating black youths. This fighting spread throughout downtown Atlanta, with white men and boys attacking any African American they could find.[21] Overall, at least 5,000 whites joined the nonsensical mobs, comprised mostly of white teenagers and young men who believed

[18] Rebecca Burns, *Rage in the Gate City: The Story of the 1906 Atlanta Race Riot* (Cincinnati: Emmis Books, 2006), 17.
[19] Ibid.
[20] Ibid., 18
[21] Wilmer, "Story of the Atlanta Race Riot," 8; Burns, *Rage in the Gate City*, 18.

it their duty to "'kill every damned nigger in town.'"[22] At least twenty-five African Americans lost their lives, dozens more received injuries from their aggressors, and the widespread property damage that resulted from the riot led to at least 1,000 blacks leaving the city.[23] Other race riots occurred during this period, in North Carolina, New York, Louisiana, Illinois, and Texas.[24] The riot served as an impetus for African Americans, especially the women who formed the NU, to turn inward to address their own community problems without the assistance of white politicians.

In early twentieth century Atlanta, black women suffered from multiple forms of oppression. Black women experienced subjugation based on both their sex and race, intersecting to create a unique form of repression unknown to white women or black men.[25] The NU clubwomen that this chapter discusses acutely understood their position in southern society and worked within the white male power structure to further the uplift of their communities.[26] The NU, therefore, centered its work on children because it felt focusing on children would be non-threatening to white leaders under the current white system of domination. As a result, NU members mastered a civil rights technique that fused accommodation with "acceptable" agitation. While many historians have not viewed accommodation as a mechanism for obtaining civil rights, this chapter asserts that finding shrewd and effective ways to obtain services and other necessary items from unwilling sources, while nodding to the white male patriarchal structure, affects entire communities and contributes to racial advancement. As historian Elizabeth Lasch-Quinn contends, separating spheres of civil rights theory into Booker T.

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[22] Franklin M. Garrett, *Atlanta and Environs: A Chronicle of its People and Events, 1880s-1930s*: Volume II (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1969), 501; John Dittmer, *Black Georgia in the Progressive Era, 1900-1920* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1977), 124.
[23] Burns, *Rage in the Gate City*, 18.
[24] Stephanie Shaw, *What a Woman Ought to Be and to Do*: *Black Professional Woman Workers During the Jim Crow Era* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996), 31.
[25] Kimberle Crenshaw, "Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence against Women of Color," *Stanford Law Review*, vol. 43, no. 6 (July 1991): 1241-1299.
[26] Ibid., 1244-5.

Washington's process of accommodation and W.E.B. Dubois' notions of agitation obscures the work of women engaged in settlement and social service work, who used multiple strategies to further the uplift of their communities.[27] Thus, the NU, while working squarely within the sphere of accommodation, used intelligent tactics to subtly include agitation in its efforts veiled as accommodation to improve its neighborhoods and the lives of members of the race, fusing the two strategies into one, which benefitted the organization and the community.

The Neighborhood Union worked as unpaid and untrained volunteers, and with paid black social workers virtually non-existent in black Atlanta, NU members tried to fill this absent role. The Neighborhood Union did not set out to completely change the community and did not foresee the substantial changes it would make to eventually transform the West End/Side of Atlanta into a more prosperous neighborhood with more opportunities for its residents. This chapter argues that NU members came together despite societal limitations based on their race and sex. It also argues that their work during these early years laid the foundation for the organization's success and that their work during this period can best be characterized as that of a community building association, striving to both improve camaraderie between neighbors and to modify the behaviors of the neighborhood's residents. To achieve these goals, the organization provided classes to the community infused with preventative education in order to improve homemaking techniques and teach employment skills designed to improve job opportunities; they also worked to achieve this goal by finding wholesome outlets for children to play.

The years in which the NU formed were characterized by the Jim Crow, racial violence, and white patriarchy, all of which intersected to influence the agenda that the NU sought to force on the West End. Tangible, concrete community change, such as the building of institutions,

[27] Elisabeth Lasch-Quinn, *Black Neighbors: Race and the Limits of Reform in the American Settlement House Movement, 1890-1945* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1993), 75.

would not be accomplished by the NU until after the its early period because the Neighborhood Union during its nascent years centered its agenda on building the community by amending the behaviors of mothers in the home and providing extracurricular activities and vocational courses for young adults and children. Eventually, the Neighborhood Union would extend its leadership into institution building, but the early years of the NU focused on elevating the race by uplifting mothers and young girls, whom the organization regarded as caregivers in the home, caregivers of future leaders of the race, and also as future mothers who needed to grow up possessing the skills needed to navigate both the public and private spheres. During this time period, women especially bore an unfair amount of responsibility for improving race relations, since the onus was on them to raise the next generation.[28] If women did not "properly" raise their children and keep a clean and healthy home, they faced immense scrutiny from both black and white society.[29] By uplifting and educating women about home life and domestic sciences, a strategy called, "gendered uplift," the NU expected they would become better mothers and raise children that were less likely to lead lives of crime, instead becoming active, responsible members of the community. During a period where racial violence, lynchings, and disenfranchisement proliferated, the NU believed that raising womanhood and girlhood to a new standard of responsibility in the community would result in the most effective gains for the West End.

Both the years leading to and the early years of the NU's activities in Atlanta and its impact on African American community building and the racial self-help movement during the early twentieth century sets the stage for this chapter. The NU fought for economic and social improvements for African Americans by focusing on women and children. The two mechanisms

[28] Evelyn Brooks Higginbotham, *Righteous Discontent: The Women's Movement in the Black Baptist Church, 1880-1920* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1993), 202.
[29] Ibid.

it employed to bring about racial uplift and community building involved using preventative education to stop social, educational, and health maladies before they occurred and focusing on women and girls to bring about "gendered uplift." The NU never abandoned its use of including preventative education in every avenue of its program and maintained a commitment throughout the organization's lifetime to raising healthy and virtuous future citizens. The NU recognized that education provided the key to racial advancement, an attitude expressed by blacks from the moment of emancipation.[30] The NU also believed the method of disseminating its key strategy of preventative education would be best achieved by teaching mothers through homemaking techniques and children and teachers at school. The Neighborhood Union's emphasis on prevention demonstrates how the NU believed that by modifying the behavior of mothers (the primary caretakers of children) through teaching them methods for preventing social and health problems before they existed, the race as a whole would improve. NU members thought that a better home life and educated mothers (and future mothers) would result in a more wholesome and healthy environment, leading to gendered uplift. The NU specifically believed that the community needed education and preventative educative activities designed to teach about cleanliness, disease prevention, and childcare. Less than a half-century removed from slavery, the NU believed many West End residents lacked knowledge of the principles of preventative education it felt was imperative for uplifting the race to a higher standard, and as a result, the organization focused its attention on the neediest members of the community.

Throughout the organization's entire existence, the NU's maintained instilling preventative education as a primary focus; however, during the early period of the organization, activities promoting gendered uplift dominated the NU's message. The NU sought to elevate the

[30] Howard N. Rabinowitz, *Race Relations in the Urban South, 1865-1890* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1980), 156.

race by modifying behaviors using strategies aimed at mothers, young women, and girls, and though it did not altogether ignore men and boys, the NU chose to focus on females first, not just because of their roles as mothers in the home and mothers of the race because it felt that whites would perceive black women petitioning for social and municipal services as less threatening than black men requesting these services. Victorian era ideals also influenced the Neighborhood Union's decision to focus mainly on women and girls. While the Victorian era concluded with the death of Queen Victoria of England in 1901, Victorian standards of morality, etiquette, piety, and "proper" gender roles remained dominant for two decades following her death, thus carrying over into the early years of the Neighborhood Union's activities. As a result, NU members found it improper to extend personal, home, and education improvement techniques to the opposite sex, except for the very young. Due to being shaped by these Victorian standards, the NU provided otherwise unavailable wholesome outlets for play, work, and vocational training to young women and girls; these outlets offered uplifting and educational alternatives for black women and girls, playing a prominent role in helping them to attack racial inequality in early twentieth century Atlanta by building values of responsible citizenship amongst participants.

The NU's general mission included providing services to all black children, but its particular focus centered on girls and young women between the ages of eight and twenty-two.[31] Since black men during this era had only a small political voice, and with racial violence like the Atlanta Race Riot still fresh in members' minds, the NU felt that focusing on women and girls would be an appropriate method for promoting social change. Race relations remained at its worst during this time period, but NU women remained hopeful and focused on helping to shape the next generation of adults, who they believed, because of their efforts, would wield more

[31] Minutes, July 8, 1908, Neighborhood Union Collection (hereafter referred to as NUC), Box 2, AUC.

power and influence in improving race relations, while being viewed with higher standing in the eyes of white Americans. The significance of this belief in the importance of raising responsible children is evident throughout professional and voluntary black women workers' agendas during this era.[32]

This chapter examines the social, economic, and political impact of the Atlanta Race Riot on black communities, its effect on residential segregation, and how black women stepped into the public sphere to serve as liaisons to the white male power structure. It also discusses specific activities and events that influenced the creation of the NU and activities that took place during the early years of the organization. The chapter will examine pre-NU social work initiatives detailing the early years of black uplift activity in Atlanta, such as the founding of orphanages and kindergartens for black youths. It will also discuss the reason for the NU's founding, when due to the death of a neighbor, Lugenia Hope, wife of the president of Atlanta Baptist University (later Morehouse College), called upon local women to create a community building association so neighbors could know each other and help one another in times of distress. Early NU activities included surveying the neighborhood, defining an organizational structure, and creating a constitution. Additional activities included providing vocational classes for young women and girls, securing a settlement house, and visiting sick neighbors (mostly women) to address housework and childcare, which all centered on promoting gendered uplift. The NU also concerned itself with the neighborhood watch and sought to remove harmful influences from its neighborhoods. It filed for incorporation with the city and received its charter in 1911, earning a positive review from the white press. While not an official, trained social work organization, receiving incorporation gave the NU the validity it needed to secure its role as leaders in the

[32] Shaw, *What a Woman Ought to Be and to Do*, 3.

community. The NU applied wholesome activities for youth in its platform, and worked to secure a black juvenile probation officer, with whom NU members closely worked. Finally, the influence of the Gate City Free Kindergarten Association as a precursor that influenced the founding and goals of the NU is discussed.[33] Discussion of all these activities and events will show how the NU served in its early years as community building organization working to bring camaraderie to the West End community and also by attempting to modify the behaviors of individuals to better the community as a whole.

Before additional examination of the NU continues, it is appropriate to look at events and situations that led to the need for the founding of the organization, including the Atlanta Race Riot's causing black Atlantans to turn inward to help their communities themselves, without the aid of whites. After the riot, the community rebuilt homes and businesses destroyed by white mobs. Urged to stay in their neighborhoods, racial separation grew at an even more rapid rate than it had before the riot.[34] Blacks sought to better their communities themselves, keeping away from local whites and white businesses whenever possible. Before and after the riot, few blacks closely interacted with whites, except as domestic servants working in white homes. According to historian Howard N. Rabinowitz, residential segregation provided both social control and acted as a mechanism of fear for white Atlantans. Segregation protected the property value of white real estate and prevented racial comingling, but also created black strongholds where whites possessed little control.[35] Following the riot, the African American business section of Atlanta moved away from the downtown area of Atlanta to Auburn Avenue, allowing black businesses to flourish without the constant supervision and overview of whites, a regular

[33] "Gate City Free Kindergarten Association," 1917 NUC, Box 12, AUC.
[34] Burns, *Rage in the Gate City,* 21.
[35] Rabinowtiz, *Race Relations,* 97.

occurrence when located downtown.[36] Blacks from other parts of the city flocked to the West Side, an area where residential segregation resulted in a higher percentage of African Americans residing in the neighborhood. Residential segregation united all classes in a common region with a shared responsibility for that locality.

Residential segregation required all African Americans to live in the same sections of the city, meaning the black middle-class lived among the black poor and witnessed first-hand the devastating conditions in the community. The worst areas in the West Side, called Battle Hill and Beaver Slide, had no running water or indoor plumbing, with unsanitary outdoor toilets. Water-related diseases such as typhus and dysentery ran rampant. In addition, the West End lacked street lights, police protection, adequate sewer systems, and the city offered no garbage collection. Exacerbating this problem, the city often dumped trash from white neighborhoods into Battle Hill and Beaver Slide.[37] Much like in white society, the fear of the poor contaminating the entire neighborhood existed in the black middle-class, motivating them to seek solutions for the lack of municipal services in attempts to better the residential community as a whole to deter this contamination.

Aside from further segregating blacks from whites, the riot also caused a cascading impact on Atlanta politics and society. The resulting turn inward motivated African Americans to become interested in expanding their separate space, and the white community also worked to further entrench segregation. The goals and the modes of operation of the two racial groups, though, differed. Blacks wanted segregation for safety and protection while whites wanted it to enforce their "supremacy." After the violent race riot in Atlanta, Governor Hoke Smith fulfilled

[36]Karen Ferguson, *Black Politics in New Deal Atlanta* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002), 28.
[37] Louie Davis Shivery, "The Neighborhood Union: A Survey of Social Welfare Movements among Negroes in Atlanta," *Phylon*, vol 3, no.2, (2nd Qtr. 1942): 151.

his campaign promise to strip the right to vote from black men and convinced Georgia to adopt disenfranchisement laws. These laws, however, did not apply to local, special, or municipal elections, which allowed black men to at least maintain a smaller, yet important measure of political license.[38] Prior to 1908, black men in Atlanta possessed the franchise and had a strong voice in the community. Holding the franchise made their social and political opinions matter to whites, as black men represented a solid voting bloc. Indeed, black men suffered as a result of Governor Hoke Smith's disenfranchisement campaign, making them nearly invisible in white political society. Because most lost political power under the new governor's administration, the black middle-class looked for new avenues to improve their status. One example is their belief that improving black neighborhoods not only assisted in bettering the living situations of all residents, it also earned respect from whites. After the race riot, black women, who as previously discussed as turning inward to help their community, also turned outward by seeking to form relationships with whites to bring about change for the black community. Holding distinction in their own neighborhoods, black women, seen as less threatening to whites, worked as liaisons to the white community, by representing their race and stepping into the public sphere to address the needs of the black community to bring about racial uplift.[39]This responsibility of working to gain services from the city by appealing to the white male power structure in attempts to bring improvements to their neighborhoods fell on NU members and taking on this role gave the organization a voice within a system that aimed strip black women of any political clout.[40]

These black women found an avenue into politics by centering their work on improving situations for women and children, which they achieved through nonthreatening petitioning to

[38] Rouse, *Lugenia Burns Hope: Black Southern Reformer* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1989), 58.
[39] Ibid., xix.
[40] Glenda Gilmore, *Gender and Jim Crow: Women and the Politics of White Supremacy in North Carolina, 1896-1920* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996) 224.

request services for their neighborhoods. As early social workers for the black community, NU members believed petitioning those in power would yield the fastest results. The Neighborhood Union centered its pleas for services within the acceptable framework of white southern society and by centering many requests on child-related issues. These black women believed that children represented future citizens of the black community in Atlanta and the United States, and educating and providing acceptable outlets of play and home life for them would provide the needed thrust toward black advancement. The strategy of focusing social work on children to bring about change was common during this period of history, as whites also focused more on children than adults in their own social outreach efforts; this shared strategy resulted from an ideal that both middle-class black and white women adhered to at the time—maternalism, which is defined as a responsibility for one's own and society's children.[41] Thus, both black and white middle-class women sought social services through the acceptable outlet of improving lives for children.

Though the black community saw separation as an opportunity for promoting safety and protection, it also created more problems for African American community leaders, especially for the provision of social welfare. After the riot, when it could be argued that blacks needed even more city services, it was difficult to rally black support for approaching the white community to ask for these civic amenities, since one effect of the riot was to cause blacks to stay away from whites. Aside from non-threatening petitioning, having no city-funded social organizations working for the benefit of black Atlantans during this time, African American women turned inward, deciding to take on the role of social welfare advocates to seek solutions to community problems, such as crime, poverty, prevention of disease, and childcare.

[41] Lasch-Quinn, *Black Neighbors*, 111.

In addition to the impact of the Atlanta Race Riot on the formation of the NU, it is important to look at the social work aimed at the black community that existed before the riot, to better understand the social environment that gave rise to the NU's post-riot activism. Three important social work initiatives predated the riot—the Carrie Steele Orphanage, the Leonard Street Orphans' Home, and the Gate City Free Kindergarten Association—and they provide context for the programs African American women developed afterward. One of the first social work programs among African Americans in Atlanta began in 1890 with the founding of the Carrie Steele Orphanage.[42] Carrie Steele, a former slave orphaned as a child, took on the task of providing for parentless children, believing that children without a solid home life would fall into lives of crime. Steele also believed living in a healthy atmosphere would prevent children from falling victim to other social maladies. Thus, Steele also followed the idea that preventative education led to improvements in children's behavior. Remembering her own painful childhood, Steele used her own money, along with funds received through public appeals, to open the orphanage.[43] Steele's work is an example of the positive impact that black women working toward social improvements for black youth had on the black community, demonstrating that the tireless efforts of one woman, born into bondage and orphaned as a child, succeeded in bettering the lives of parentless children by making sure their childhood was better than the one she experienced.

White women worked for similar improvements during this time period. In the same year (1890) that Steele opened her orphanage, the second important social initiative took place with Amy Chadwick, an English Missionary, founding the Leonard Street Orphans' Home for

[42] Shivery, "The Neighborhood Union," 149.
[43]Cynthia Neverdon-Morton, *Afro-American Women of the South and the Advancement of the Race, 1895-1925* (Knoxville, University of Tennessee Press, 1989), 143.

black girls, where she determinedly worked for forty-six years to ensure that orphans had access to education and a safe home in order to give them a chance for the best life possible.[44] The program ran through private donations until the Community Chest took over funding for five Atlanta orphanages, including Chadwick and Steele's, in 1924.[45] By 1942, Atlanta University had purchased the Chadwick property and used it as a College Nursery School.[46] Eventually, the city of Atlanta took over the work once the city began providing funding for black social services.

Finally, a third social initiative directly resulted from activities conducted at a conference held at Atlanta University in 1899 or 1900.[47] At the conference, W.E.B. DuBois, the Atlanta University Professor and future co-founder of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) and editor of the NAACP's *Crisis* for twenty-five years, read a paper entitled "The Welfare of the Negro Child."[48] Gertrude Ware, a white woman and daughter of the first president of Atlanta University, who instructed kindergarten at the university, also attended the conference and DuBois' reading.[49] She also gave a lecture there and led a group discussion about the unsupervised children of working mothers. This conference highlighted DuBois and Ware's shared interest in helping black children, and preventing crime and vice among children.

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[44] Amy Chadwick Society Interest Form, http://www.familiesfirst.org/amy-chadwick-society-interest-form/, [accessed July 1, 2015].
[45] Ibid.
[46] Shivery, "The Neighborhood Union," 149.
[47] The date is unknown. Robin Kadison Berson, *Marching to a Different Drummer: Unrecognized Heroes of American History* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1994): 130; Rouse, *Lugenia Burns Hope*, 28.
[48] Neverdon-Morton, *Afro-American Women of the South*, 142.
[49] Ancestry: 1880 United States Federal Census, http://search.ancestry.com/cgi-bin/sse.dll?rank=1&new=1&MSAV=1&gss=angs-g&gsfn=gertrude&gsln=ware&msfng0=edmund+asa&msfns0=ware&gskw=atlanta&_83004002=black&cpxt=0&catBucket=rstp&uidh=vr6&_83004003-n_xcl=m&cp=12&pcat=ROOT_CATEGORY&h=40848953&db=1880usfedcen&indiv=1&ml_rpos=3; Neverdon-Morton, *Afro-American Women*, 142.

As a result, Ware, with the support of DuBois, formed this third social work endeavor by founding the Gate City Free Kindergarten Association.[50]

The kindergarten opened in May 1905, "for the purpose of providing and maintaining free kindergartens for the poorest and most unfortunate colored [sic] children of Atlanta whose parents were unable to pay for them in other kindergartens."[51] Second to the church, formal education remained central to black progress and mobility.[52] According to a historical document detailing a history of the Gate City Free Kindergarten Association, kindergartens started children on the right path in life.[53] They learned cleanliness, manners, honesty, and other quality skills. The history continued, "And who knows but some of them, will become shining lights, because of these good influences. Therefore, the money expended upon the kindergartens is not merely charity, it is an investment in human life that will be sure to bring returns here and hereafter."[54] The work of the Gate City Free Kindergarten demonstrated that if children received the right start in life, they could become upright, responsible citizens, and agents for racial progress. Education represented one of the keys to upward mobility, and the founders of the Gate City Free Kindergarten Association and other kindergartens believed indoctrinating children at the earliest possible moment provided the push for race progress.[55] This message replicates much of the work initiated by the NU, especially in its early days, when NU members sought to guide children into responsible future citizenship.

Later, once it was formed, the NU shared the Gate City Free Kindergarten Association's goal of providing education to black children in their formative years of development. By 1906,

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[50] Shivery, "The Neighborhood Union," 149.
[51] "The Gate City Free Kindergarten", 1917, NUCBox 12, AUC.
[52] Higginbotham, *Righteous Discontent,* 19.
[53] The Gate City Free Kindergarten, 1917, NUC, Box 12, AUC.
[54] Ibid.
[55] Higginbotham, *Righteous Discontent,* 19.

five kindergartens for black children operated in the area.[56] Lugenia Hope attended the Atlanta University Conference where she received her first taste of Atlanta social work. As a result, Hope served on the board of Ware's Gate City Free Kindergarten Association, and even served as president for the first three years. Years later, Hope credited her interest and involvement in Atlanta social work because Ware and DuBois "forced" her to attend the conference, demonstrating the value and impact the conference had on bettering conditions for the black community.[57] Unquestionably, Hope's three years as president of the kindergarten (1905-1908) influenced the message and activities of the NU. It is unknown why Hope ended her tenure as president of the kindergarten in 1908, but the formation of the NU the same year and the workload associated with its start-up may have played a role. Although she had social work experience from living in Chicago, working with the Gate City Free Kindergarten likely instilled in Hope pride in her community, while also helping to foster in her the leadership skills she needed for her role as president of the NU. Hope had visions of expanding the Gate City Free Kindergarten Association's message of education to the community, but the horrendous 1906 riot stalled Hope's ambitions while simultaneously drawing an impulse out of her that demanded further attention to the more wide-reaching focus of uplift in her neighborhood.

Even before the riot, which brought additional attention to Atlantan racial strife, African American women took steps to address community problems, such as the establishment of kindergartens and orphanages. Hope took it a step further by, two years after the violent riot, forming the Neighborhood Union on July 8, 1908, with the help of local West Side women.[58]

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[56] Edyth L. Ross, "Black Heritage in Social Welfare: A Case Study of Atlanta," *Phylon*, vol. 37, no. 4 (4th Qtr. 1976): 304.
[57] Speech by Mrs. Hope, July 11, 1933, Atlanta University Presidential Records-John Hope, Box 135, AUC.
[58] Historian Karen Ferguson implies that the Atlanta Race Riot directly contributed to the establishment of the NU. She claimed the organization was created a few months after the riot when in fact it was formed nearly two years later. See Ferguson, *Black Politics in New Deal Atlanta*, 26.

Though the founders provided no direct link between the riot and the formation of their uplift group, it is apparent that the riot nonetheless influenced the social context that made the NU necessary. The heightened sense of community and racial solidarity created in the riot's aftermath contributed to the sense of urgency for bringing about change when a neighbor in need went unnoticed. Between 1908 and 1961, the NU played an important role in community building, although its significance in the neighborhoods began its ultimate descent in the late 1920s and early 1930s.

The death of a neighbor provided the direct impetus for the founding of the NU in 1908. On the West End of Atlanta, an area with a conglomeration of classes, but with a solid middle-class surrounding the universities, an unnamed young couple, along with the wife's father, moved into the neighborhood. The father raised the daughter himself, without a mother.[59] Both the husband and the father worked all day beginning at 5 A.M., while the wife stayed home, attending to domestic duties. The woman rarely spoke to her neighbors, but the neighbors knew of her because she sat daily on her front porch. The woman had fallen ill, and her husband and father, believing her situation trivial, continued to work.[60] After a few days' absence from her spot on the stoop, some of her female neighbors checked on her and found her very ill and in need of medical attention. She died a few hours later. The neighborhood women, shocked that someone could fall ill and die because of a "lack of womanly care," declared that "we should know our neighbors better," castigating themselves because "true neighborliness did not exist."[61]

[59] Hattie Watson, "Work of the Neighborhood Union," *Spelman Messenger*, 1916, NUC, Box 5, AUC.
[60] L.D. Shivery, The History of the Neighborhood Union," Atlanta University Presidential Records- John Hope, Box 135, AUC.
[61] Jacqueline Rouse, "The Legacy of Community Organizing: Lugenia Burns Hope and the NU," *The Journal of Negro History*, vol. 69, no. ¾ (Summer-Autumn 1984): 117; Shivery, "The Neighborhood Union," 149.

According to Hattie Watson, first secretary of the Union and 1907 Spelman Seminary graduate, "This demonstrated the fact that the people did not know each other in the community as well as they ought and that they needed to get together so that they might assist each other in case of need."[62] Thus, the original purpose for the creation of the NU was to modify the behavior of the members of its own organization, by opening themselves up to the community, making friends and allies. On July 8, 1908, eight neighborhood women met at the residence of Lugenia Hope for the purpose of discussing possible settlement work in the neighborhood.[63] Concerned over the woman who died because her neighbors did not know her and failed to reach her during her time of distress provided the motivation for the discussion. The list of women included: Lugenia Hope, Mary Stokes, Sallie White, a Mrs. Goodwin, Dora B. Whitaker, a Mrs. Kelsey, Laura Bugg, and Hattie Watson.[64] The majority of these women held either a college or university education or connections to local black colleges. Seeing the incident as a chance to organize her community, Hope proposed the idea of a community building and social improvement association to address the needs of residents in the West End of Atlanta. The association intended to improve relationships between neighbors through surveying, providing social clubs, and vocational training for young women and girls. Surveying neighbors served several purposes. It introduced the new organization to public, improved or started relationships with neighbors, and discovered the urgent need of neighbors. First, the women elected officers: Lugenia Hope as president, Hattie Watson as secretary, and Dora B. Whitaker as treasurer.[65] Then they set the geographic boundary lines for community work. The boundaries consisted of

[62] Hattie Watson, "Work of the Neighborhood Union," *Spelman Messenger*, 1916, NUC, Box 5, AUC.
[63] Minutes, July 8, 1908, NUC, Box 2, AUC.
[64] All efforts have been made to identify women's given names. "Mrs." is only used in the text when given names could not be located.
[65] Minutes, July 8, 1908, NUC, Box 2, AUC.

"Ashby street on the West, Beckwith street on the North, Walnut street on the East, and Greensferry [street] on the South."[66] This neighborhood surrounded Spelman Seminary (later Spelman College), Atlanta Baptist College (later Morehouse College), and Atlanta University. Other women quickly flocked to this social improvement organization, which by the second meeting, had six more members.[67]

The new organization decided to formalize their work by making it an official association. As early as its second meeting, the Neighborhood Union created a constitution to state its aims, by-laws, and organizational structure. According to Article 2, the aims of the organization consisted of "the moral, social, intellectual, and religious uplift of the community and the neighborhood" and the need "to establish lecture courses that shall instruct and help the mothers of the neighborhood in the proper care of themselves and their infants."[68] The NU's constitution also detailed its goals to seek health improvement measures regarding cleanliness, fresh air, and lighting, and encouraging industry and vocational training among young women and girls. These goals all represented methods at prevention through education, by instructing mothers on preventative home measures, promoting public health, and providing classes for young women and girls in the name of gendered uplift, which could lead to future employment opportunities. Finally, the constitution detailed what became a bedrock of the association—its commitment to using surveys and censuses to know every individual in the neighborhood and the needs most pressing to the residents with the intent of remedying social, civic, and health problems.[69] To demonstrate its commitment to community building, the NU adopted the motto,

[66] Ibid.
[67] Minutes, July 23, 1908, NUC, Box 4, AUC.
[68] Constitution, 1908, NUC, Box 2, AUC; Charter, January, 1911, NUC, Box 2, AUC.
[69] Ibid.

"Thy Neighbor as Thyself."[70] The very motto of the Neighborhood Union demonstrates a commitment to community building through creating relationships with neighbors. These aims remained the center-point of the NU's message until the organization phased out in 1961.

The newly formed NU focused on improving "the moral, social, intellectual and spiritual standard in each neighborhood."[71] The concept of community held special meaning to African American men and women because of segregation restricting residential mobility; Jim Crow became the glue that tied black communities together. Most blacks had few qualms about segregated neighborhoods, as it allowed easy access to jobs, congregation, and community building, as mentioned in this chapter's earlier examination of the results of the Atlanta Race Riot.[72] African American neighborhoods created small enclaves within larger cities, housing churches, businesses, schools, colleges, jobs, and private and charitable organizations.[73] Blacks of all social classes lived near one another, and issues affecting the poor therefore touched the entire community. Thus, the Neighborhood Union believed that contacting the neediest members of its community through house-to-house surveys would serve as a mechanism for helping to bring about racial advancement.

According to historian Stephanie Shaw, black professional women workers created a sense of "socially responsible individualism," connecting individual attainment with a responsibility for the race.[74] Professional workers included paid and unpaid workers in both the private and public sphere, especially before the rise of professions amongst black women,

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[70] Rouse, *Lugenia Burns Hope,* 117-8; Shivery, "The Neighborhood Union," 149; Dittmer, *Black Georgia,* 11; "Negro Women Ask Charter to Teach Care of Home," *Atlanta Constitution,* January 31, 1911.
[71] Editor of the *Atlanta Constitution,* "Treating Negro Problem at Its Basis," *Atlanta Constitution,* 1911, NUC, Box 2, AUC.
[72] Rabinowitz, *Race Relations,* 98
[73] Ibid., 101-102.
[74] Shaw, *What a Woman Ought to Be and to Do,* 7..,7.

beginning in the 1920s.[75] NU clubwomen shared this same need of responsibility to the race, as many came from the upper echelon of black society, but felt a public commitment to help others in the development of child-rearing, morality, respectability, health care, and neighborhood watch.

The NU started out by filling multiple roles, acting as a social club, racial and gendered uplift organization, and community watch program determined to uplift the standing of African Americans through community building. While researching strategies to achieve its goals, NU members read an article, "Family Life as a Determinant in Racial Attitudes of Children," and rallied behind its doctrine.[76] Although the article addressed learning about race relations and cooperation in the home, it can also apply to home education. The article contended that children received their first lessons regarding people and thinking through the home. Beginning as small children, they observed and interpreted their parents, mimicking their attitudes and opinions. If not careful, negative messages and inferences about people and life translated to children.[77] Children learned from their parents at an early age wrong from right and certain behaviors such as cleanliness or uncleanliness, thrift or frivolity, and piety or sinfulness; therefore, the NU believed that amending the manners of parents would directly affect the attitudes and actions of children. A better home life would lead to a better child, which would result in him or her growing up to be a more responsible, well-rounded adult.

To begin their mission for community uplift, NU members took their first step by reaching out to their neighbors to introduce themselves and learn which conditions most concerned them. This action started the beginning of the NU's long history of using surveys to

[75] Ibid., 8.
[76] Family Life as a Determinant in Racial Attitudes of Children," NUC, Box 1, AUC.
[77] Ibid.

identify the needs and urgency of problems affecting the community. After conducting their first house-to-house survey, NU members learned that the most pressing issues affecting their community included unsanitary conditions, poor housing, lack of recreational facilities, and juvenile delinquency.[78] The NU would eventually address all of these concerns. These surveys asked families common questions, such as name and address, but also the ages and sexes of their children, the occupation of family members, and the school attendance of children.[79] NU members held special concern for whether children attended school, stayed home to care for other children, or worked to financially assist their families. Likely to refer young children to the Gate City Free Kindergarten Association, or other kindergartens, NU leaders asked about children under the age of seven, and who watched these children when the mother worked.[80] The NU did not want children, especially under the age of seven, home alone without supervision when they could learn important life skills by attending kindergarten. When the NU enquired about teenaged children, it also asked what grade children reached and, if they left school before the age of sixteen, why they left. No public high school existed for African American children until 1924, but families with means could send their children to private high schools.[81] The NU also asked if children ever had legal trouble, and if the parents held any membership in church, recreational activities, or lodges—all indicators of social status. Thus, the NU took the initial steps to improve relationships in the neighborhood by reaching out to community members, introducing themselves, and finding out issues pressing for neighbors. The Neighborhood Union's work in these early years can best be characterized as unpaid and untrained, with NU

[78] Questionnaire for Survey of Standards of Living in Colored Districts in Atlanta, NUC, Box 8, AUC.
[79] Ibid.
[80] Ibid.
[81] Herman "Skip" Mason Jr., *Black Atlanta in the Roaring Twenties* (Dover: Arcadia, 1997), 57; Ronald H. Bayor, *Race and the Shaping of Twentieth Century Atlanta* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996), 205.

members seeking to fill the absent role of social workers to their community and its survey work demonstrates members' attempts to fill that void.

After completing its survey work, the NU expanded and meticulously and carefully divided the city into well-organized zones. Each zone had a chairman elected by the neighborhood president, who organized neighborhoods and supervised and handled reports. The organization also had a Board of Directors comprised of "neighborhood presidents, zone chairmen, and department heads" who created and ran activities involving "recreation, health and sanitation, and child welfare."[82] Subsequently, each zone divided into districts had a leader, who served as a member on the Board of Directors.[83] The organization eventually became so successful that the city government turned over the majority of Atlanta's black social work to the NU. Shifting the responsibility to the association allowed the city to further disregard black social services. The city government failed to provide adequate city, municipal, and educational services for African Americans for decades.[84]

At their third meeting, held July 23, 1908, the NU members brought in the names of seventy-seven girls and young women ages eight to twenty-two that they had discovered during their canvassing of the neighborhood, with the intent of finding wholesome outlets and vocational training courses for them.[85].By focusing on future mothers, improving home life became a central tenet for the NU, since the organization believed the best way to reach the masses lay with reaching those who carried domestic responsibilities. Historian Stephanie Shaw

[82] Neighborhood Union: An Organization for the Moral, Economic, and Social Advancement of the Colored People, NUC, Box 2, AUC.
[83] Ibid.
[84] Rouse, *Lugenia Burns Hope,* 118; Cynthia Neverdon-Morton, "Self-Help Programs as Educative Activities of Black Women in the South, 1895-1925: Focus on Four Key Areas," *The Journal of Negro Education*, vol. 51, no. 3, (Summer 1982): 216; Edyth L. Ross, "Black Heritage in Social Welfare," 305; "Neighborhood Union Work Expanded by Chest System," *Atlanta Constitution*, November 12, 1924.
[85] Minutes, July 3, 1908, NUC, Box 4, AUC.

has documented how black women, as mothers and caregivers, bore a heavy responsibility, as their private responsibilities spread into the public. Accountable for the home and her children, she subsequently held an obligation to the entire race.[86] By readying young women and girls for motherhood so that they could impart their newly-learned skills on their future children, the NU believed the next generation would prosper.

To begin its female and child-centered mission, the NU organized many preventative educational opportunities. It worked in conjunction with several local black colleges and organized an Arts Department that taught classes ranging from sewing and cooking to woodwork and millinery. During this time, Atlanta provided no vocational classes for black children. The NU sought to fill this gap, turning inward to provide homemaking and vocational courses to young women and girls. The NU intended to modify homemaking techniques among mothers, and provide educative activities for young women and girls, to teach domestic skills and offer classes to improve employment opportunities, all early activities designed to build character among residents. Through NU courses, boys learned athletics and military tactics (taught by male instructors from the colleges), while girls learned about domestic responsibilities. While the strategies of the NU shifted over the years to a focus on public education, public health, and combatting the Great Depression— the Arts Department, along with other skillful subdivisions, remained an important part of the association until the Community Chest officially limited its work to a pre-school age only clinic in 1927.[87]

Keeping with its focus to improve the lives of children, the association created a number of recreational activities and clubs for children and young adults. The NU women believed these

[86] Shaw, *What a Woman Ought to Be and to Do,* 202.
[87] Sarah Mercer Judson, "Building the New South City: African American and White Clubwomen in Atlanta, 1895-1930," (PhD diss., 1997), 392.

age groups represented the most formative years in human moral development, as an adequate education and garnering useful skills prepared children for adulthood. By December of 1908, the NU created a calendar for its uplift and educative activities for children and young adults. Monday nights had a dress-cutting class; Tuesday, millinery classes; Thursday, classes on art; and Friday afternoon, an unspecified class for children. Some of these classes served vocational educational purposes, but many others held entertainment for children to support healthful play, which helped to keep children from idleness. Some of the games played at these children's classes included Prince of Paris (similar to "Who stole the cookie from the cookie jar?"), a desk relay (similar to musical chairs), and various games involving bean bags.[88] In early 1909, the NU added sewing and embroidery classes.[89] By June 1910, women in the NU had expanded its uplift work to include classes in basketry.[90] The NU believed skills learned in these classes would allow many girls to grow up and work from home, enabling them to balance home life with economic skills to support their families.[91] Thus, by offering vocational courses to young women, the NU sought to modify their behavior by creating industry among the residents and increasing employment opportunities for later in life. It appears, however, NU women experienced some difficulty getting girls to come to classes, as in August 1910, the president asked directors to attend to their districts to drum up support for the programs.[92]

Though the NU's primary focus for instructional courses centered on women and girls, it did offer some courses for boys and young men. By the end of 1909, the association canvassed each district, seeking boys and young men from the ages of six to twenty-one. Some activities

[88] *Monthly Time Book,* 1912, NUC, Box 4, AUC.
[89] Minutes, May 28, 1909, NUC, Box 4, AUC.
[90] Minutes, June 9, 1910, NUC, Box 4, AUC.
[91] Shaw, *What a Woman Ought to Be and to Do,* 27.
[92] Minutes, August 1910, NUC, Box 4, AUC.

the NU offered for boys and young men included manual training, military tactics, and athletics. These classes took place just once a week, on Saturdays from 4 to 5 P.M.[93] Considering that classes for boys and young men took place only once a week for just one hour, while classes for women and girls took place with more frequency, demonstrates the NU's true belief that focusing on women and girls had more importance in its aim to uplift the race. The NU members did not teach these male-centered programs, but their husbands, including Professors Matthew Bullock and Charles Wardlaw, took on this responsibility. In 1909, the association likely thought it inappropriate to instruct boys in physical activities and vocational training as Victorian values of gendered behavior remained dominant. Years later, after progress made through organized social work under the Atlanta School of Social Work, the enfranchisement of women, and the proliferation of female college graduates, women taught classes to boys.

The NU also sought to instill proper homemaking, health care, and childcare techniques to residents by conducting monthly mothers' meetings. Mothers' meetings, not uncommon to clubwomen's other affiliations, like church associations, became especially important, as they gave lessons on how to better care for the child and home.[94] On each fourth Friday of the month, various NU members held mothers' meetings at their homes.[95] Aside from general house care, women taught health measures, such as how to care and bathe the sick, the importance of fresh sunlight and ventilation, and the value of washing hands and keeping children clean.[96] Meetings discussed various types of disease and preventative measures to prevent or stop the spread of communicable diseases.[97] Imparting these lessons on mothers shows how NU members sought to

[93] Minutes, December 3, 1908, NUC, Box 4, AUC; Minutes, December 17, 1908, NUC, Box 4, AUC.
[94] "Supplementary Report," N.D., NUC, Box 5, AUC.
[95] Minutes, December 3, 1908, NUC, Box 4, AUC; Minutes, December 17, 1908, NUC, Box 4, AUC.
[96] Minutes, August 19, 1908, NUC, Box 4, AUC.
[97] Minutes, Fourth Friday in February, 1910, NUC, Box 5, AUC.

modify the behavior of mothers to improve home life for families. Few families could afford care from a physician, so preventative measures and minor experience in caring for the sick proved mandatory skills for caregivers.[98] Mothers' clubs held an important purpose: to teach family members strong and successful house work ethics. The program also intended to develop a support system for neighborhood mothers, a safe space where mothers could express their concerns and receive advice from other mothers, improving relationships among female neighbors. NU members felt building character in adults at the home level would allow children to become responsible, moral, and socially conscious adults.[99]

Unfortunately, many mothers could not observe the requirements of mothers' meetings because of situations such as their work schedules, and therefore the sparsely attended meetings often turned into business meetings.[100] Many women worked all day long as domestics, laundresses, or in other employments, and to maintain a cleanly environment that met the NU's standards proved difficult. Additionally, many families needed their children to work away from home to supplement the family income.[101] Thus, learning about strategies to improve home life and finding wholesome activities for youth did not represent a priority for many working-class poor people.

The NU continued its work to achieve its vision of providing wholesome outlets for black youth, and subsequently guiding children away from lives of vice and crime.[102] "Proper" avenues

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[98] Lynn Marie Pohl, "African American Southerners: Medical Care at the Turn of the Twentieth Century," *Bulletin of the History of Medicine*, vol. 86, no. 2 (Summer 2012):186; Anne Firor Scott, *The Southern Lady: From Pedestal to Politics, 1830-1930* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1970), 31.
[99] Ibid., 16
[100] Minutes, Fourth Friday in March, 1910, NUC, Box 4, AUC; Minutes, Fourth Friday in April 1910, NUC, Box 4, AUC.
[101]"Cases Listed on which Comish Had Worked," *Atlanta World*, April 29, 1931; Tera Hunter, *To 'Joy My Freedom: Southern Black Women's Lives and Labors After the Civil War* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1997), 51.
[102] "Petition from the Women's Civic and Social Improvement Committee," August 19, 1913, NUC, Box 2, AUC.

for children to unleash their energies and time represented a vehicle to race progress through the prevention of idleness, which white and black Americans believed would breed unwholesome thoughts and actions. Continuing with previous work from black Atlantans, such as the creation of playgrounds on the sites of kindergartens and orphanages, the NU created numerous playgrounds for black children, a service which the city government of the time failed to provide in substance.[103] The NU created the first private playground for African American children on the campus of Atlanta Baptist College in 1909.[104] The NU believed children needed healthful outlets to play and created several playgrounds throughout its existence. Years later, the city took over the construction of playgrounds for both black and white children, although the NU continued to create more places for children to play. By 1914, the city ran nine public playgrounds for white children but only two for black youth. The numbers would not improve—as late as 1926, black children only had three city-run playgrounds while white children had over twenty places to play.[105] After years of petitioning by the NU, the first park for African Americans would come in 1923, with Washington Park located in the West Side of Atlanta.[106]

After working in homes and colleges for a year and a half, by the end of 1909, the NU secured a house similar to settlement houses in other cities. A settlement house is a standard location, often offering lodging, and provides activities, including, but not limited to, extracurricular activities, vocational training, and social provisions, such as health care and childcare facilities. While one views settlement homes as a largely Northern and Midwestern phenomenon, primarily working for the benefit of immigrants, historian Elizabeth Lasch-Quinn

[103] Ronald H. Bayor, *Race and the Shaping of Twentieth Century Atlanta*, 149.
[104]Suggestions for the Pageant, 1933, NUC, Box 6, AUC.
[105] Ibid.
[106]"Continuation of Welfare Study: Local Race Relationship Committee, Report No. 2," 1923, Atlanta Lung Association Collection (hereafter referred to as ALAC), Box 47, Atlanta History Center (hereafter referred to as AHC).

has amply demonstrated that African American women, especially in the South, built similar homes for their neighborhoods and placed themselves squarely within the Progressive Era's idealization of settlement homes.[107] Other southern settlement homes included the Phillis Wheatley branch of the Young Women's Christian Association and the People's Village in Mt. Meigs, Alabama.[108] Through the purchase of a settlement home, instead of holding classes at houses of members or local black colleges, the NU held them in a centralized location where the entire neighborhood could benefit. The Neighborhood Union believed that providing a specific, local center would create support for their programs, give its association more authority, and create interest in the community.

It appears that the white community shared the NU's belief that poor blacks needed education to improve themselves and promoted the NU's movement to secure a settlement house. An *Atlanta Journal* article written on December 9, 1909, contended that white Atlantans supported a settlement house for Atlanta's West Side, to improve unsound members of the race. The article stated, "Recognizing that much of the vice among the negroes [sic] . . . is because of their ignorance of the most rudimentary laws of domestic science, and the laws of ordinary health and morals, President [John] Hope's wife devised the plan for the settlement house."[109] The article also highlighted the significance of prevention through education. The NU sought to teach working-class residents about the importance of home care, health, and manners, all behavioral modification methods. Though various situations resulted in the NU moving its settlement house several times throughout the course of its existence, it always maintained the

[107] Lasch-Quinn. *Black Neighbors*, 76.
[108] Ibid., 100, 111.
[109] "Negroes Inaugurate Educational Movement: Campaign Started by Colored Baptists to Better Racial Conditions in City," *Atlanta Journal*, December 9, 1909; In "The Black Woman's Struggle for Equality in the South, 1895-1925," by Cynthia Neverdon-Morton, states the date of the article as December 12, 1909.

use of a Neighborhood House, as having one remained a top priority because members felt the neighborhood needed a strong cultural center in a familiar location for residents of the neighborhood to attend activities, events, and health clinics. The NU, as the only organization working toward black social work measures in Atlanta, needed a center to represent both the organization and the community. Other educative events, some sponsored by the NU, some sponsored by others, also met at familiar locations, such as the Carrie Steele Orphanage, the Leonard Street Orphan's Home, the Gate City Free Kindergarten Association, or local churches. Providing activities in familiar locations increased attendance, as residents trusted the intentions of reputable organizations. This proved especially prominent regarding mobile public health clinics, discussed in chapter three.

One such event held at a familiar location in March 1910, at Atlanta Baptist College, involved a track meet for the benefit of children. At the suggestion of NU member Mary Brawner, the organization decided to hold the event for the entertainment of public school children.[110] This idea served the purpose of changing the track meet from just a fundraiser into a fun activity, where children could participate and provide much needed physical activity and healthy recreation, an opportunity few children had because of the lack of playgrounds in black neighborhoods. Funds raised from the track meet benefited both the NU and the Gate City Free Kindergarten Association, as the two groups sponsored the event.[111] Some of the activities included various dashes, a potato race, a running broad jump, a one mile run, the shot put, a running high jump, and a relay race.[112] Various professors (all men and many spouses of NU members) judged the contest, including Professor Samuel H. Archer, while Professor Matthew

[110] Minutes, Second Thursday of March 1910, NUC, Box 4, AUC.
[111] Minutes, Fourth Friday in March, 1910, NUC, Box 4, AUC.
[112] Annual Intercollegiate Track Meet," Pamphlet, 1910, NUC, Box 8, AUC.

W. Bullock served as referee. Many businesses donated to the track meet, such as Hightower and Graves, Eiseman and Weil, and H.G. Spalding and Brothers. It is unknown whether these were black or white-owned businesses. Many other self-employed businessmen took out advertisements on the flier produced to promote the event, including a Dr. R.M. Reddick, who volunteered his time at the Neighborhood Clinic, another NU project focused on health care, and C.C. Cater, a grocer (both NU spouses). Finally, the wealthiest company in black Atlanta, the Atlanta Mutual Insurance Association (later the Atlanta Life Insurance Company), headed by Alonzo F. Herndon, took out a large ad at the bottom of the page. Millionaire Alonzo F. Herndon, the wealthiest African American in Atlanta, neither directly worked with the Neighborhood Union nor the many organizations to which it would later be affiliated, but on several occasions, his company promoted black fundraising and other social events by taking out advertising space on programs and fliers even after his death in 1927, thus supporting the black community in more indirect ways.[113]

Aside from finding wholesome outlets for play and fundraising, another of the NU's earliest activities included visiting sick neighbors and helping those in need. Disturbed by the woman who died because her neighbors did not know her, NU members constantly visited sick neighbors, bringing milk, eggs, or other foodstuffs. They also cleaned homes to maintain a sanitary environment. NU members went to their sick neighbors' homes despite chance of contagion for various illnesses, such as tuberculosis, typhus, general illness, or a number of other ailments. The women wanted to make sure that never again would a neighbor die alone in her home because no one cared to check on him or her. The NU took a special interest in sick children, often visiting frequently, but sick mothers remained the primary focus of home care.

[113] Ibid.

Undoubtedly, this provided hope and good cheer for those in distress, improved relationships between the NU and community members, and the provisions brought provided food for ill neighbors who may not have possessed the ability to work, shop for food, or provide for their families. At meetings, the Union always mentioned sick neighbor visits or highlighted instances when someone in its neighborhood died from disease, a common instance.[114]

The NU also directed a great deal of their focus to neighborhood watch, working meticulously to reduce crime and vice in its neighborhoods. From the very beginning of the NU's founding, Lugenia Hope and other members constantly petitioned the City Council for street lights, arguing for the protection of women, whom, as domestic servants, often worked late evenings and needed well-lit streets on the return trip home. The city denied almost every request. The NU also repeatedly unsuccessfully petitioned the city to have police officers to patrol the area. Its goals worked in contraindication to the desires of the people it tried to help, since the majority of the neighborhood preferred as little police involvement as possible. At that time, per capita black arrests in Atlanta were some of the highest in both the South and the entire country.[115] Subject to immense harassment by police officers, for "crimes" as petty as loitering, many blacks, especially men, found themselves arrested unjustly.[116] While the NU had the best of intentions, regular law enforcement activity in black neighborhoods by white officers would only serve to benefit the black middle-class, fearful of crime and vice. Had its push for a larger police presence met success, it would have resulted in more problems for the community's poor. Fortunately for the poor, the city ignored their requests. African Americans had, however, asked

[114] Minutes, November 9, 1911, NUC, Box 4, AUC; Minutes, June 29, 1912, NUC, Box 4, AUC; Minutes, August 9, 1912, NUC, Box 4, AUC; Minutes, April 10, 1913, NUC, Box 4, AUC; Minutes, August, 1913, NUC, Box 4, AUC; Minutes, November 9, 1913, NUC, Box 4, AUC.
[115] Dittmer, *Black Georgia in the Progressive Era*, 120.
[116] Bayor, *Race and the Shaping of Twentieth Century Atlanta*, 9, 174.

for the appointment of black police officers to patrol predominantly African American neighborhoods since the Reconstruction Era, but no black police officer existed in Atlanta until 1948.[117] Even without proper police protection, the NU and other community leaders did not allow neglect to deter their activities and fundraising events, in which police supervision would have proved beneficial for maintaining safety**.**

To promote the uplift of the race, NU members continued their neighborhood watch work by also diligently seeking to remove harmful influences from its neighborhoods, such as gambling dens or houses of ill repute. In February 1911, Hattie Barnett reported that she succeeded in moving two families out of her district who broke the Sabbath and frequently gambled.[118] Records do not state where these families moved. During a meeting in 1913, Mary Brawner reported that someone sold whiskey in her district.[119] She wanted to stop these sales, but her actions to achieve this outcome remain unknown. Likely, she used the same methods the NU members followed to rid their area of other houses of ill-repute; at times, they successfully convinced the immoral neighbors to move to a new area and as early as 1909, the organization created an Investigation Committee "to investigate and report to the N.U. everything that seems to be a menace to the neighborhood."[120] One of the first cases the NU uncovered involved a house on Roach Street that an NU member, a Mrs. Brice, brought to the attention of the organization by relating the horrible things occurring at the residence, though these "horrible things" went unspecified in detail. Though the outcome remains unknown, examples of the NU's efforts included its petition to the city council for the removal of the residents of this home.[121]

[117] Ibid., 177.
[118] Minutes, February, 1911, NUC, Box 4, AUC.
[119] Minutes, August 1913, NUC, Box 4, AUC.
[120] Minutes, September 9, 1909, NUC, Box 4, AUC.
[121] Minutes, October, 14, 1909, NUC, Box 4, AUC.

Although the NU had good intentions, it did not seek to reform or assist these community members. Its main goal involved removing unsavory elements from the neighborhood. Eliminating questionable neighbors from the area remained a focus for community improvement, yet it did nothing to alter white perceptions of racial inferiority since the goal remained exclusion, not transforming the lives of individuals in question. The NU judged these neighbors of questionable morality too detrimental to convert and subsequently sought to delete them from the neighborhood by pushing the problem onto another neighborhood of African Americans; no mention is made of the impact of these people's forced migration on the other neighborhoods to which they moved.

Shortly after forming the Investigation Committee, the members started their first discussions on June 6, 1910 about the NU becoming incorporated by the city; at the following meeting, the NU members decided to ask their husbands and male supporters for information about how to achieve this end.[122] The NU proved efficient with community work, yet needed a lawyer to write up its charter and decided their husbands and male allies should address the matter since very few women possessed legal training and the NU members personally knew several male lawyers. This represents how the NU, an organization spear-headed by women, conformed to gender notions of its day by requesting men to do the legal work necessary for incorporation of the organization.[123] Although black men faced disenfranchisement after the 1906 riot, they still held power and sway in their own communities, especially middle-class professionals. Few women worked in traditionally male professions such as doctors or lawyers, thus NU members needed legal support from African American men.

[122] Minutes, June 6, 1910, NUC, Box 4, AUC; Minutes, June 24, 1910, NUC, Box 4, AUC.
[123] Susan Smith, *Sick and Tired of Being Sick and Tired: Black Women's Health Activism in America* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1995), 1.

On January 30, 1911, the NU filed for incorporation as a legal entity. By this point, the organization's membership had grown tremendously since its first meeting, with over forty women listed on the charter.[124] It listed its present officers as Lugenia Hope, president; Dora B. Whitaker, treasurer; and Maggie Williams, secretary. The charter requested incorporation under state laws, with the title, "Neighborhood Union . . . The aforesaid organization is not an institution for financial gain or profit, but purely charitable and benevolent.[125] The NU restated its objectives, and its right to a constitution and by-laws. Along with legal issues and rights, the Union concluded: "Wherefore, petitioners pray to be incorporated under the name and style of aforesaid with the powers, privileges, and immunities herein set forth and as are now or may hereafter be allowed a corporation of similar character under the laws of Georgia."[126] Peyton A. Allen, one of the future founding members of the Atlanta Branch of the NAACP, served as the petitioners' attorney.[127]

The NU was successfully incorporated when the city approved its charter on March 17, 1911, giving them official recognition from the city.[128] Incorporation gave NU members validity as a racial uplift organization centered on untrained social work and racial uplift. The Union's charter included its "Aims Granted by the Laws of Georgia Under the Charter of the State of Georgia."[129] It detailed its desire to expand the organization's works into the entire city and serve as a model for other social uplift groups. The list of aims specified in the charter included the

[124] The Women included: Mesdames Lugenia Burns Hope, Hattie Watson, Dora B. Whitaker, Hattie Barnett, Mary Stokes, Lucy Ware, Laura Bugg, Ella Crawford, Mary E. Fryer, Nellie Bryant, Georgia Winn, Jesse King, Annie King, Ellen Mathis, Mary Brawner, Emma Jones, Tennie Winfrey, Fannie Eubanks, Odelia Mormon, Lizzie Ports, Catharine Bullock, Mattie Chapman, Daisy Early, Abbie Cook, Sophia Avery, Bessie Starks, Leona Johnson, Carrie Kelly, Pauline Johnson, Henrietta Hubert, Mary Wardlaw, Sallie White, and Misses Blanche Baugh, Alice Turner, Willie Blue, Charity Collins, Rosa Harris, and Maggie Williams. Charter, January 30, 1911, NUC, Box 2, AUC.
[125] Charter, January 30, 1911, NUC, Box 2, AUC.
[126] Ibid.
[127] Herman "Skip" Mason Jr., *Images of America*, 11.
[128] Georgia, Fulton County to the Superior of Said County, Charter, March 17, 1911, NUC, Box 2, AUC.
[129] Ibid.

following goals: to enact relationships with neighbors and foster cooperation to improve communities and the race; to partake in mass movements; to provide wholesome outlets for play and maintain a settlement house to hold activities; to establish adult clubs for the better care of the home and child welfare; to encourage sanitation and petition the city for improvements; to serve as a neighborhood watch and abolish houses of ill repute; to cooperate with city offices and agencies; to survey the neighborhood and provide maps concerning black communities; and finally, to use interracial cooperation to improve race relations.[130] The goals of the Neighborhood Union demonstrate how the association had advanced from one focusing on improving relationships within the community, to one which centered on uplifting black Atlanta into neighborhoods which had expanded access to needed services, increased safety, and access to white allies. NU members believed that by adhering to the aims listed in their charter, white society would take notice; by creating a more respectable black community, members felt an avenue for communication and understanding with white society would open.[131]

The incorporation of the NU received attention from the white press, specifically an *Atlanta Constitution* publication. Providing a favorable review, the article claimed the NU deserved attention from those concerned with the "negro [sic] problem."[132] The article stated that the "primary purposes of the organization are to elevate the moral, social, intellectual, and spiritual standards in each neighborhood; to lead mothers in better care of infants, cleaner and more sanitary maintenance of their premises."[133] Additionally, the article continued, the organization fought vice and crime, appealed to individual homemakers, and organized classes in

[130] Ibid.
[131] Higginbotham, *Righteous Discontent*, 196; Kevin K. Gaines, *Uplifting the Race: Black Leadership, Politics, and Culture in the Twentieth Century* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996), 3.
[132] Editor of the *Atlanta Constitution*, "Treating Negro Problem at its Basis," *Atlanta Constitution*, 1911, NUC, Box 2, AUC.
[133] Ibid.

cooking, sewing and general housework, all industrious activities that received approval from white society.[134] By organizing these classes, the NU educated mothers and future mothers in how to become better caregivers for their children. The article charged that cooking food under sanitary conditions, sewing clothes to promote thrift, and general housework to maintain a clean home where children and adults had less risk for catching disease and sickness benefited the entire city, as disease did not recognize segregation ordinances and could spread into white neighborhoods. In addition, it claimed that white homes had already achieved these aims (although poor white homes often resembled homes in black neighborhoods), and now African Americans began following the lead of whites and using wholesome influences to solve its own problems. The article concluded by praising the NU and urging whites to assist in these measures. Accordingly, "The Constitution has many times pointed out, co-operation from the superior race is called for in the degree that the white man is inevitably affected by the progress or retrogression of the negro [sic]."[135] As historian Tera Hunter concluded, whites believed that the overall health of the black community demanded attention, as domestic servants, washerwomen, and others worked in close contact with whites.[136] If African Americans could raise their standard of living and prevent disease and sickness, the white community would also benefit. The article also mentioned the responsibility of the "superior" race to assist those who are attempting to raise themselves to the home life standards of whites.[137] Thus, while supportive of the organization, it still referenced racial authority in its message.

[134] Ibid.
[135] Ibid.
[136] Tera Hunter, *To 'Joy My Freedom,* 196.
[137] Editor of the *Atlanta Constitution*, "Treating Negro Problem at its Basis," *Atlanta Constitution*, 1911, NUC, Box 2, AUC.

After receiving incorporation, the NU continued its efforts to find other wholesome outlets for children in an attempt to keep them from idleness and vice, which if unchecked, served as a detriment to uplifting the race. In 1912, the NU held its first carnival for the benefit of the community. Little is known about the carnival, but it is believed it occurred around the time of July 4, 1912. It held several Fourth of July carnivals, but extended this work into large, giant enterprises, with the cooperation from the entire community. There is more information, however, about another carnival held in 1919. Led by the NU, the carnival began Thursday evening, December 4, and lasted until Saturday, December 6, 1919. In addition to petitioning for approval of the carnival, after years of requesting street lights to no avail, the NU petitioned the city council to use its own lights for the carnival, finding ways to circumvent white supremacy and the neglect of black neighborhoods to accomplish this goal. The City Council responded to its request, by granting the NU permission to place a rope strung with lights across Chestnut Street, between Beckwith and Fair Streets, as a solution to the lack of street lighting under the condition that cars could still cross and businesses could operate while the rope was hung.[138] The city's response shows how the NU took matters into its own hands to solve a community problem and that, though the city did not provide the service, the NU was able to do so only because it took the step to work with the city to seek this improvement. This shows one example of how blacks turned inward to solve community problems and found ways to implement its goals and activities with or without the benefit and assistance of the city.

The carnival flier highlighted fun and patriotism, but also educational activities for the community. In fact, there were four purposes for holding the carnival: to serve as a fundraising measure, to provide upright activities for adults and children, to offer educational opportunities,

[138] *City Records,* Vol. 26, December 1, 1919, 673, AHC.

and to promote public health. The carnival raised funds through tickets sales and the sale of goods and services. The NU infused educative activities into nearly every platform of its program, whether the benefactors knew it or not. Some of the upright activity attractions at the carnival included a house of horrors, house of mystery, and a fishing pond.[139] The carnival's educative activities included an art palace, an Ice Cave of Aurora, Japanese tea house and Indian Scouts (to educate children about other cultures).[140] Much like white perceptions of non-white cultures and ethnicities, the Ice Cave, tea house, and Indian Scouts may have played to common stereotypes at the time. The NU infused health promotion into its carnival, with a table run by the Red Cross and a Dental Exhibit.[141] Holding activities like this carnival was just one of the ways in which the NU attempted to uplift its neighbors through both preventative education and regular education, all with the goal of community building.

Aside from providing lavish entertainments, the NU also worked with black Juvenile Probation Officer, Garrie Moore, to whom the police referred delinquent black children when in trouble. The NU actually helped secure his employment as a juvenile probation officer for African American children in 1912; before his hiring, the city had no black officer for delinquent or criminal children.[142] Moore, "a graduate of the New York School of Social Work and a professor of sociology at Morehouse College, was the first boys' worker ever appointed for work among Negro boys by the YMCA in the United States . . . a man of fine spirit and an excellent organizer and leader."[143] Thus, Moore came with extensive credentials and made a suitable first juvenile probation officer for wayward black children in the city. According to the NU's 1913-

[139] Carnival, 1919, NUC, Box 8, AUC.
[140] Ibid.
[141] Ibid.
[142] Shivery, "The Neighborhood Union,"151.
[143] Ibid., 152.

1914 Annual Report, "Some boys and girls have been put into the reformatory, some in orphanages and we have found homes for others. Many have been helped by direction and oversight."[144] The NU highlighted the case of one girl who, falsely accused, found redemption, and subsequently returned to school.[145] Additionally, many abandoned girls who turned to vice received placement with the Juvenile Probation Officer. The NU's involvement in helping to gain the employment of a juvenile officer to help wayward children find better situations, helped to promote its goal of racial uplift by focusing on attending to social ills among children, hoping for rehabilitation and a chance to create more upright, future citizens through behavioral modification to pave the way for racial advancement.

The NU never lost sight of its vision: to provide wholesome and entertaining activities and fundraisers remained a primary focus of the organization. It continued this work by holding frequent movie fundraisers once motion pictures became popular and readily available. The organization charged twenty-five cents for admission and typically had good turnouts for these motion picture events. The NU either secured the use of a black-owned theater or used the theater at Morehouse College. For example, in 1916, the Union showed the film *Evangeline*, the "World's Greatest Love Story."[146] One benefit of showing this particular film is that the NU thought that the community could benefit from its educational plot, as "the first feature-length dramatic film made in Canada, *Evangeline* is based on Longfellow's famous poem describing the expulsion of the Acadians to Louisiana and the undying love of Evangeline and Gabriel."[147] Although a love story, the film's educational message about the travails of the Acadians and their

[144] Annual Report, 1913-1914, NUC, Box 5, AUC.
[145] Ibid.
[146] Ticket Stub: *Evangeline*, NUC, Box 9, AUC.
[147] Canadian Film Encyclopedia, *Evangeline*, 1913, http://tiff.net/CANADIANFILMENCYCLOPEDIA/content/films/evangeline [accessed December 2, 2013].

movement to Louisiana and becoming the Cajuns benefitted the audience, while simultaneously raising funds for the NU.[148]

That same year (1916), the NU had expanded into most of city. According to Louie Shivery, NU historian and long-time secretary, "It had a president, three vice presidents, a treasurer and three secretaries; there were forty-two persons on the board of directors and fourteen person in charge of various districts."[149] Eventually, the NU grew to encompass every black neighborhood in Atlanta, consisting of sixteen zones. At the first meeting, the NU focused squarely on the one half-mile zone surrounding the three colleges. Then, it expanded its work to five districts in 1911, which quickly shot up to twelve districts and to fourteen by 1914, and finally to sixteen zones, reaching the entire city where African Americans resided.[150] Although the Neighborhood Union would obtain the most successes and achievements in the West End, the neighborhood in which the founders resided, it also worked to combat health and social ills in all black neighborhoods in Atlanta, demonstrating the impact and need for a community building association to address problems in black neighborhoods, such as the Neighborhood Union.

The NU received outside support that promoted its work to provide wholesome activities for black youths. In 1917, a member of the Gate City Free Kindergarten Association wrote an article about the importance of the child. Its message highlighted the NU's work and showed how its ideas about children, so reflected through preventative educative activities and good home life, had begun to cross the nation in an overall effort to improve the lives of future citizens. According to the article, "Of late years the thinking men and women of the world are coming more and more to believe that the child is the most important factor in our civilization.

[148] Ibid.
[149] Shivery, "Neighborhood Union," 152.
[150] Ross, "Black Heritage in Social Welfare," 305; Shivery, "The Neighborhood Union," 152.

Mothers and fathers everywhere are striving to give their children advantages which they did not have."[151] The article continued, addressing children as future citizens and how a further understanding of children's emotional and physical needs contributes to the production of knowledge in the child. The article concerned itself with children lacking responsible parents to guide them into citizenship and the importance of children's development during the ages of three to six, the primary ages of children in kindergarten.[152] Children obtained much of this lost knowledge production once they reached public school age, but the formative years of development prior to the first grade gave children a head start and made programs such as the Gate City Free Kindergarten Association essential. The governing body of the kindergarten believed that some children needed extra help in life, because of insubordinate, overwhelmed, or working parents (especially mothers). By attending kindergarten, children could obtain much of the life education not given in many homes. The article also stated that for these reasons, the founder created the Gate City Free Kindergarten Association in 1905. Hope received her early education in child welfare and that the association undoubtedly impacted her thinking and strategies for the creation and vision for the NU, as both organizations conveyed similar messages. Thus, one can conclude that the Gate City Free Kindergarten Association served somewhat as a precursor to the NU and its work with very young children.

Despite the limitations southern society placed on the Neighborhood Union, the organization created a community building agenda for the neighborhood, which it carried out through focusing on improving relationships with neighbors and behavioral modification by providing courses and classes for mothers, young women, and girls. Its social work activities of surveying the neighbors, providing courses for mothers and girls, and extending employment

[151] "Gate City Free Kindergarten Association," 1917 NUC, Box 12, AUC.
[152] Ibid.

opportunities for young women represent different ways the NU sought to carry out its mission, filling a void in the community by working as volunteer social workers. The Neighborhood Union's initial goals involved teaching preventative education methods to mothers and girls and focusing on gendered uplift to bring about change to the West End of Atlanta. The organization believed the elevation of girls would create future citizens who would hopefully have a better lot in life because of the benefit of the NU's influence. The Neighborhood Union did not envision the massive transformation the neighborhood would eventually undergo, but its early efforts remained behavioral modification (especially in mothers) and finding wholesome outlets for children. The early work of the NU primarily centered on improving home life through the construction of domestic science and vocational education courses, mothers' meetings, concern for sick neighbors, and focusing on healthy play for children. As an organization mainly founded on the principle of promoting uplift activities through preventative education, the NU soon expanded into the public school system and worked to directly benefit children, achieving both successes and failures in this battle for improved educational opportunities for black school children. The NU accomplished its goals by obtaining for children a more adequate formal education and working for improved sanitation in African American public schools.

Chapter Two
Striving for Improvement:
The Neighborhood Union and the Battle for Public Education

Founded in 1913, the Neighborhood Union (NU) formed the Women's Social Improvement Committee (WSIC) to fight for improvements in the Atlanta public school system. While spearheaded by the NU, the WSIC membership included over a hundred of the most prominent African American women in the city.[153] These women visited and inspected local schools for black children and found them to be unsanitary, with poor lighting, and compared with the number of students, to have small playgrounds. Their investigation revealed the inadequacy of black schools when compared to schools for whites. In August of that year, the WSIC presented a petition detailing their findings of black public schools to the Board of Education, an all-white male entity.

This petition being addressed to men from women, demonstrates the dynamic during this era of men holding top leadership positions, when women had to appeal to men for assistance. The women of the WSIC, through their interactions with the all-white, male politicians of Atlanta, served as liaisons between the black and white communities.[154] In addition, the petition's introductory text referred to these women as simply women, not "Negro" women, which reveals how the WSIC members viewed themselves within the framework of racial constructs—they were women first, blacks second. The WSIC members made efforts to appeal to these politicians as mothers, women, and concerned citizens. These women's use of mentioning their status as taxpayers in the petition also shows another strategy that the WSIC

[153] Louie Davis Shivery, "The Neighborhood Union: A Survey of Social Welfare Movements among Negroes in Atlanta," *Phylon*, vol 3, no.2, (2nd Qtr. 1942): 153.
[154] Glenda Gimore, *Gender and Jim Crow: Women and the Politics of White Supremacy in North Carolina, 1896-1920,* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996), 151, 224.

used in hopes of showing that since they paid taxes and financially contributed to the city government, the city should provide adequate facilities for black school children. In their petition, they capitalized the word "Negroes," demonstrating a divergence between white and black society. Typically, whites did not capitalize "Negro," but frequently used the term when describing African Americans. The petition stated that African American pupils only received an education up to the seventh or eighth grade as it remarked on the double sessions (a reduced instruction of 3.5 hour class periods) in the "four or five lower grades."[155] White students however, received city-funded public education through grade twelve, with high schools for white students, initially separated by sex, existing since at least 1884, with the creation of the Boys' High School and the Girls' High School, both located on Washington Street.[156]

The WSIC's petition's first request regarded the unsanitary conditions in black schools, which the WSIC found in nearly every black school the WSIC visited. The petition specifically discussed Houston Street School, which lacked sanitary toilets and had too few toilets for the number of enrolled students. Additionally, the WSIC's petition detailed other schools, which had bathroom facility problems as well, including lacking facilities that adequately separated the sexes, which led to the potential for intermingling of the sexes, since boys and girls did not have any privacy or walls separating the two restroom facilities. Besides bathroom issues, the WSIC found other schools they visited, such as one at Roach Street School where the basement, used as a classroom because of overcrowding, lacked sufficient sunlight, making it dark and murky and "so damp as to injure the health of the children."[157] Such conditions bred disease, like

[155] "Petition from the Women's Civic and Social Improvement Committee," August 19, 1913, Neighborhood Union Collection (hereafter referred to as NUC), Box 2, Atlanta University Center, (hereafter referred to as AUC).
[156] Franklin M. Garrett, *Atlanta and Environs: A Chronicle of its People and Events, 1880s-1930s, Vol. II* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1969), 72.
[157] "Petition from the Women's Civic and Social Improvement Committee," August 19, 1913, NUC, Box 2, AUC.

tuberculosis, which thrives in dim, damp environments. The WSIC probably listed sanitation issues early in its petition because it appeared the easiest problem to remedy. The WSIC's concerns about proper sanitation demonstrates an interest in disease and its spread, which though in black schools, affected all Atlantans, since disease could spread from the black to the white community. Though black children did not typically come into close contact with whites, many parents daily crossed the color line and could spread diseases they caught from their children to whites.[158]

The women's second request included a recommendation regarding the establishment of a black school in South Atlanta. Though residents paid taxes, no public schools for black children existed in that area; the petition argued that taxpayers deserved a school for their children. Granting this request required either construction of a new school or turning a scarcely-used white school into a school for African American children. Few white students lived in South Atlanta, a predominantly African American neighborhood, and the WSIC argued that these white children could attend school in other neighborhoods, clearing the way for turning a white school into a black school. Part of the WSIC's argument regarding the need for this school included the assertion that children needed proper supervision and guidance to grow into responsible adults and could not attain the necessary skills for citizenship without an education. Again, the WSIC made this suggestion with concern for school children, but also as a measure to prevent crime and vice among children with no outlet while their parents worked, suggesting crime would overflow into white neighborhoods if this request was not granted.[159]

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[158] Tera Hunter, *To 'Joy My Freedom: Southern Black Women's Lives and Labors After the Civil War*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1997), 198-213; Sarah Judson, "Civil Rights and Civic Health: African American Women's Public Health Work in Early Twentieth-Century Atlanta," NWSA Journal, vol. 11, no. 3, Appalachia and the South: Place, Gender, Pedagogy (Autumn, 1999): 97.

[159] "Petition from the Women's Civic and Social Improvement Committee," August 19, 1913, NUC, Box 2, AUC.

Another of the petition's proposals addressed a concern regarding the practice of double sessions in black schools. A double session meant that children received only a half day of instruction, and another class of students received lessons during the second session, held during the second half of the day. Typically separated into a morning and afternoon class, these double sessions reduced the number of instruction hours black students received in the school day from the intended five hours of instruction to three and a half hours. The petition contended, "We believe that the double session enforces idleness, and thereby promotes shiftlessness in our children . . . The majority of the parents are in service and their children being unemployed, are on the streets out of school hours."[160] Again, this appeal by the WSIC to the city shows the committee's strategy of inciting fears in whites about idle children committing crime and vice if out of school in attempts to achieve its goal. The WSIC appealed to stereotypes, seemingly claiming that more "lazy" children turned to lives of crime if unsupervised.

Finally, the petition made appeals in favor of teachers in black schools, who taught forty to sixty children during one period and forty to sixty in the day's second session. This high student to teacher ratio harmed the health of a teacher, not only increasing her chance of catching an illness, but also because the system worked her to the point of exhaustion.[161] Teachers needed to focus on individual students, a task nearly impossible under the double session system—teachers being forced to educate up to 120 children in a single day prevented children from receiving adequate educations and proved tiresome for the teacher, causing her to be susceptible to illness.[162] Appealing to people's sense of morality, the women of the WSIC framed their request from the perspective of a mother, claiming to be concerned with raising virtuous,

[160] Ibid.
[161] Ibid.
[162] Ibid.

responsible future citizens. By mentioning crime, the petitioners tried to instill fear into the minds of those reading the petition, which they hoped would result in the powers that be taking action. In drafting the petition, the WSIC played to white fears of immorality, laziness, crime, and disease, while bowing to the white male power structure.

The tedious work that the WSIC and NU members put into the creation of their petition and how they fought for better educational opportunities for children is discussed throughout this chapter. To solve this problem, the Neighborhood Union turned outward, appealing to politicians through reasonable means, to improve educational opportunities. This chapter argues that the Neighborhood Union's risky strategy of confronting the white male power structure directly produced mixed results. The NU, and in the early period, WSIC members, did not know the reception they would receive when confronting white policymakers. A poor or angry reception could lead to retaliation by providing even less amenities for black communities. While its hard work and political canvassing paid some dividends, such as the creation of new schools, the NU also encountered many failures in its efforts. Nonetheless, these failures allowed the NU to further its agenda, by forming a relationship with the City Council and Board of Education, receive attention from the mainstream press, and increasing public awareness about the detrimental conditions under which black children learned. Both its successes and failures shaped what the NU could accomplish and how it moved forward in its fight to improve the Atlanta school system for black students. Although the Neighborhood Union and the WSIC did accomplish every goal it set out to achieve, it did convince the all-white school board to take some action, which it did through the creation of new schools and the increasing of black teachers' salaries.

Through fighting for more equitable conditions for black school children, the NU and the WSIC employed in their petition several key strategies for improving educational facilities for black youth. They appealed to the white power structure as mothers concerned about children, stressing that children represented the next generation of black citizens. Though bigger issues existed that NU members could have focused on to achieve racial uplift, they chose to focus on educational improvement, because they believed they would be perceived as non-threatening to white male politicians and civic leaders. Rather than asking for political or economic rights for blacks in general, the WSIC focused their efforts on the most helpless and harmless sector of society—children. In addition, the WSIC believed instilling fear into the white community using threats of disease, maladjusted youth, immorality, and a potential for crime, as an effective strategy, which the WSIC members hoped would lead to whites establishing improved educational facilities and opportunities for black youth. The WSIC asserted that potential for these social ills would decrease if white authorities adhered to preventative measures designed to improve educational opportunities for black youths. The NU and the WSIC knew that whites controlled the social, economic, and political framework for race relations, but also feared disease, vice, crime, and immorality spreading from black neighborhoods into white neighborhoods. The WSIC sought to ensure that all children, regardless of socio-economic status, obtained an education. As whites feared that individuals of ill-repute would cross the color line, the WSIC intelligently played to these fears in attempts to enact educational reform.

Prevention through education remained a central goal of the NU, regardless of the topic, and members spread that belief to WSIC members. Stopping harmful influences, such as truancy, benefitted the entire community. While creating fear could potentially produce a panic, the NU saw it as the best remedy for preventing such potential maladies. Children, while obtaining a

traditional education in the schools, also learned preventative measures at school, which were either taught or neglected (depending on the parents) in the home.[163] By contacting white policymakers, prevention through education served two benefactors: the white male power structure, which received an education of the inadequacy of black public schools, and school children, who could only benefit from improvements in education and educational facilities.

The NU also believed that the higher the educational level, the easier children slipped into lives of virtuosity and uprightness as adults. These black women sought to challenge white supremacy, but through their behavior, in a less direct way than white supremacists imagined. W.E.B. Dubois' concept of the "Talented Tenth," is evident among NU clubwomen's work, which stated that those who achieved higher education became leaders of the race and proved examples for others.[164] Dubois maintained that racial progress came from the elites, and that a higher percentage of black students attending colleges resulted in a faster avenue toward the attainment of civil rights.[165] Achieving a higher level of education also prevented children from lacking the abilities to make social, political, and economically conscious decisions. NU members believed their best opportunity for spreading morality and middle-class values lay in education, especially higher education. The further a child went in school, the more likely he or she would attend college, making him or her able to join the ranks of the "Talented Tenth." Black elites believed that every individual who joined the Talented Tenth contributed to the advancement of the race as a whole. It is for these reasons that the NU and WSIC focused its efforts on educational improvements for black students.

[163] Leon F. Litwack, *Trouble in Mind: Black Southerners in the Age of Jim Crow,* (New York: Vintage Books, 1998), 70-7.
[164] W.E.B. DuBois, *The Souls of Black Folk*, (Chicago: A.C. McClurg and Co., 1903), 54-62.
[165] Ibid.

An analysis of the 1913 petition remains central to this chapter, but the NU's other work for educational improvements will be discussed as well. An examination of the ideologies of the NU and the WSIC highlights the importance of traditional education and their desires to keep children enrolled in school. After the Board of Education suggested cutting traditional education for black school children in the seventh and eighth grades, the WSIC wrote a letter to the editor of the *Atlanta Constitution*. Although the letter resulted in them gaining some support, the city still temporarily cut the eighth grade. The NU continued to survey schools after the WSIC disbanded, and in 1919 defeated an educational bond that made no allocation for black schools. It also worked to combat adult illiteracy and helped pass a 1921 bond that included funds assigned for black schools. Another petition, created by the "Citizens' Committee" in 1923, highlighted problems similar to the ones included in the 1913 petition. Educational data from the 1930 Census and a 1937 report from the Georgia Teachers and Educational Association concludes this chapter.

The WSIC worked diligently investigating the public schools of African American children.[166] The 1896 *Plessy v. Ferguson* decision legalized segregation under the "separate but equal" mandate, but like most other places in the South, facilities in Atlanta rarely had equal provisions or services.[167] Since slavery greatly limited African American access to schooling, education and literacy became paramount matters to black communities throughout the South.[168] Black elites believed that a public education resulted in freedom and autonomy from whites. According to undated NU minutes (likely from 1913), "Education will safeguard the nation."[169]

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[166]Louie Davis Shivery, "The Neighborhood Union,"156.
[167] Legal Information Institute: Plessy V. Ferguson, http://www.law.cornell.edu/supremecourt/text/163/537 [accessed December 29, 2013].
[168] Kevin K. Gaines, *Uplifting the Race: Black Leadership, Politics, and Culture in the Twentieth Century* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996), 32-3; Tera W. Hunter, *To 'Joy My Freedom*, 40.
[169] Minutes, Undated (1913?), NUC, Box 1, AUC.

Unfortunately, city and state governments allocated few funds for black schools; whites did not want educated black citizens because they feared it provided a direct challenge to white supremacy.[170] Whites believed educated African Americans would rally together and make demands for social, civic, and political equality. The dual school system that segregated black and white children indicated which type of education that school children in Atlanta and the South received.[171] The separate and inherently unequal system provided whites with a far superior education. Black teachers received substantially lower salaries and had often acquired only a slightly higher educational level than their students.[172] By 1936, derelict, one-room, one-teacher schools comprised seventy-one percent of black schools in Georgia.[173]

In teaching and in other employments, white women worked in fewer numbers than black women. Lower wages, poverty, and the inability of black men to find steady employment necessitated that black women work. Seen as less threatening by whites, black women could acquire long-term employment at higher rates than black men; therefore, black women obtained more steady employment. In addition, an increased number of black women across the country worked compared with white women. For many white women, teaching represented a middle-stage in life. Once they married, they stopped working if the family income allowed it.[174] Thus, black women worked as teachers for a higher average number of years than white women,

[170] Litwack, *Trouble in Mind*, 101.
[171]Ronald H. Bayor, *Race and the Shaping of Twentieth Century Atlanta*, (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996), 197.
[172] Some Statistics on Negro Schools: Census of 1930, Atlanta University Presidential Records- John Hope, Box 179, AUC.
[173] Georgia Teachers and Educational Association," *Herald*, March, 1937, Atlanta University Presidential Records- John Hope, Box 178, AUC.
[174] William H. Harris, *The Harder We Run: Black Workers since the Civil War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1982), 65.

demonstrating that for many, teaching represented a life-long or long-term profession, not a temporary entry into the working world before marriage.[175]

In their work for educational improvements, the WSIC did not attempt to dismantle the "separate but equal" platform originally established in *Plessy v. Ferguson*. Its efforts merely focused on improving the educational system for black students, which had varying degrees of success. Whether married mothers or single women, African American women, much like their white counterparts, saw their progressive role, especially regarding the struggle for educational opportunities for black youth, as an extension of their roles as mothers. According to historian Glenda Gilmore, class mobility came through education, and as mothers, the responsibility fell more heavily upon women to make this achievement than it fell on men.[176] Black middle-class women considered themselves responsible for the entire race, and believed that providing children with a proper education represented the swiftest way to meet the needs of children.[177] A predominant concern, racial uplift found a ready audience by focusing on children as society's future citizens. Whites, however, feared a challenge in the racial hierarchy from educated African Americans, and although some had good intentions, most remained resistant to improving educational opportunities for black youth.[178]

In 1913, in preparation for the petition presentation, the WSIC women spent six months inspecting Atlanta's twelve black schools, the results of which formed the basis for the previously discussed petition. The study discovered deplorable conditions and shortcomings that hindered educational efforts. They found that the black public school system enrolled 6,163

[175]Gilmore, *Gender and Jim Crow*, 43..
[176]Ibid., 14.
[177] John Dittmer, *Black Georgia in the Progressive Era, 1900-1920* (Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 1977): 141-6; Cynthia Neverdon-Morton, "Self-Help Programs as Educative Activities of Black Women in the South, 1895-1925: Focus on Four Key Areas," *Journal of Negro Education*, vol. 51, no. 3, (Summer 1982): 216.
[178] Litwack, *Trouble in Mind*, 101.

students, with a seating capacity of 4,102 (67 percent seating capacity), demonstrating a higher enrollment than the number of seats available.[179] Black schools enrolled approximately 4,000 students in double sessions, either in the morning or afternoon, meaning a traditional school day became limited to only three and a half hours of instruction. Not only did students not effectively learn the courses and skills necessary for development during these reduced school hours, but teachers, overworked, could not provide the essential education for optimal success. Along with overcrowding, the committee discovered that nearly every school possessed inadequate lighting, ventilation, and outhouses.[180] Furthermore, no school for black children existed in South Atlanta.[181] In this region, where residents paid city taxes contributing to the maintenance of the public school system, 170 school age children lacked enrollment in any school. The NU and the WSIC found great concern regarding children not enrolled in school. Assisting in helping unenrolled children find placement in local schools became a primary goal of the NU, even after the WSIC disbanded. As a result of these discoveries, the WSIC clubwomen, working within the confines of racial segregation, carefully calculated a campaign for the improvement of black schools. Although white and black social reformers rarely collaborated, the WSIC women met with influential white women throughout the city to further their campaign's agenda. Seeking allies in the fight for improved educational opportunities, the WSIC hoped that allying with these

[179]Survey of Colored Public Schools (1913-1914), NUC, Box 7, AUC; Jacqueline Rouse, "The Legacy of Community Organizing: Lugenia Burns Hope and the Neighborhood Union," *The Journal of Negro History*, vol. 69, no. ¾ (Summer-Autumn 1984): 123.
[180] Rouse, "The Legacy of Community Organizing," 124.
[181] Survey of Colored Public Schools (1913-1914), NUC, Box 7, AUC; Elisabeth Lasch-Quinn, *Black Neighbors: Race and the Limits of Reform in the American Settlement House Movement, 1890-1945* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1993), 123.

white women would result in white support for black educational improvements for black children—the harmless victims of discrimination.[182]

Working with these white women represented an important step in the WSIC's work, as white southern women had moved into the public sphere in great numbers after the Civil War as a result of a change in gender roles during the war that meant more southern women demanded access to space outside the home after the war.[183] The WSIC's appeal to these white women, who had more community influence, paid dividends; many white women, including members of the Board of Lady Visitors of the Board of Education, supported the WSIC's cause and even visited black schools for a firsthand view of the unsanitary and overcrowded conditions. These white women's inspection of the wretched conditions under which the schools operated furthered the WSIC's goals of the idea of invoking fear in the white community, through the witnessing in person of the unsanitary, unhygienic conditions under which children learned.[184] According to a subsequent report, the WSIC sought the assistance of every influential white woman in Atlanta. Many of these women spoke with the WSIC and agreed to cooperate with the movement. Though the overall results of the WSIC's campaign for improvements in the black school system were ultimately mixed, the WSIC's work to raise awareness about their movement with these white women demonstrates some of the successes that the Neighborhood Union achieved during its educational reform campaign.

After they visited and inspected black schools and worked with white women to raise awareness about the deplorable conditions in black schools, the NU and the WSIC conducted

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[182] Kimberle Crenshaw, "Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence against Women of Color," *Stanford Law Review,* vol. 43, no. 6 (July 1991): 1244; bell hooks, *Ain't I a Woman: Black Women and Feminism* (Boston: South End Press, 1981), 13.
[183] Anne Firor Scott, *The Southern Lady: From Pedestal to Politics, 1830-1930* (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1970), 110-111.
[184] Survey of the Colored Public School (1913-1914), NUC, Box 7, AUC.

work to prepare for the presentation of their findings to members of the City Council and the Board of Education. Before presenting the petition, councilmen and Board members received compiled surveys and photographs of the inexcusable conditions in black schools, attempting to appeal altruistically to the councilmen while also using the mechanism of fear, reminding that such conditions bred disease that could spread to the white community. The committee sent these pictures to members of the Board of Education, the superintendent of the schools, City Council members, and the president of the Lady Visitors Board.[185] The WSIC women hoped that by putting a face to the nameless children on paper through photographs, politicians would adopt measures to ensure an adequate learning environment for African American youths. The investigation aroused so much publicity that even the *Atlanta Constitution*, the leading daily Atlanta newspaper, highlighted the campaign under the caption, "Aroused by Exposure, Board will Investigate."[186]

In the article, a representative from the WSIC appealed to white Atlantans, both through the realities of segregation and by appealing as mothers to the greater constituency, charging WSIC lacked any power without the City Council. She asserted, "We cannot put this matter up to the council too strongly, I think, for not only the present health and comfort of the school children depend upon an adjustment, but so does the future citizenship of the city."[187] Centering their concern on children, the WSIC women hoped that whites would rally behind them, supporting the idea that educated children made a responsible, healthy, and respectable future citizenry. Although few whites wanted black children to rise to future leadership positions, the WSIC argued that improving education for black children would benefit whites by deterring

[185] Minutes, Women's Social Improvement Committee, August 19, 1913, NUC, Box 4, AUC.
[186] Rouse, "The Legacy of Community Organizing," 125.
[187] Ibid., 126.

crime and supporting the civic health of the entire city. The WSIC recognized the need for governmental support and framed their pleas within the "acceptable" southern social stratum based around racial segregation. These women appealed to the white male power structure, subtly challenging Jim Crow by working within the given framework of race relations. With a traditional education, the WSIC believed, children subsequently assimilated easier to the dominant (white) society's norms, creating future citizens who would meet white society's criteria of respectability. The WSIC continued to meet success by raising publicity in the mainstream press, read by the majority of Atlantans. Although some community members may have been incensed by attempts to improve black education, the publicity garnered undoubtedly turned some sympathetic whites toward its cause.

Before formally presenting their work to the board, the WSIC visited members of the Board of Education, City Council, and Board of Lady Visitors. Each member of the above governing bodies received a personal copy of the petition. According to a later report, it met and interviewed each City Council member, white pastors, and even the mayor, asking for improved conditions for black school children.[188] This strategy proved effective in spreading the message of the WSIC's petition and exposing the derelict conditions of black schools. Whether attending City Council and Board of Education meetings, meeting with influential white women, or visiting councilmen and board members at their homes, the WSIC meticulously and forcefully worked to have their voice heard. Thus, the WSIC's hard work and political canvassing raised awareness for the cause and succeeded at informing white policymakers about the subject of the petition before its official presentation, allowing politicians access to the information in advance.

[188]Survey of Colored Public Schools (1913-1914), NUC, Box 7, AUC.

At the same time it was preparing to present its findings to the Board, the WSIC spoke to various churches about its survey and the importance of sending black children to school in order to increase awareness for its cause. The WSIC chose to focus on churches because churches served as the center of black communities. For African Americans, churches embodied more than a place of worship, representing a place where African Americans could congregate freely without supervision from whites and thus present important issues to the neighborhoods.[189] At times, the church served as a meeting place for social clubs and benevolent associations, schools, vocational training, and locations to hold large audiences for political meetings, town halls, or other important events.[190] At these churches, the WSIC urged parents to pay their "personal tax" so children could attend school.[191] This tax represented a tax on individual students so they could enroll in the public school system, not a property tax. Additionally, children needed proper vaccinations before attending school and adequate clothing and shoes and the WSIC urged parents to address these issues so their children could attend school.[192]

To further bring public awareness to their cause of improving black schools, the WSIC also visited thirty-nine homes and found eight children out of school, primarily because they lacked the proper clothing to attend school.[193] As a result, the WSIC made provisions for children to obtain clothing. The meeting minutes where this issue was discussed did not, however, mention whether these families had vaccinated their children or paid their personal taxes. If one could not afford clothes for their children, perhaps they could neither afford to pay

[189] Evelyn Brooks Higginbotham, *Righteous Discontent: The Women's Movement in the Black Baptist Church, 1880-1920,* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1993), 7.
[190] Ibid.
[191] "Tenth Meeting of the Women's Social Improvement Committee," NUC, Box 4, AUC.
[192] Rouse, "The Legacy of Community Organizing," 124.
[193] Minutes, Women's Social Improvement Committee," September 2, 1913, NUC, Box 4, AUC.

their personal tax nor vaccinate their children.[194] Although the WSIC had good intentions in assisting these families, it did not recognize the monetary strain of vaccination and personal taxes. In addition, at their meeting on September 2, 1913, WSIC members appointed a committee to visit each school on September 8, the first day of school, to see how many children did not have seats. The committee recorded the number of students unable to acquire seating, the reason for this inability, and followed-up on each student to ensure they could attend class as soon as possible.[195] The WSIC's attempts to educate the black community on how to have their children enrolled in school, through the payment of the personal tax, obtaining vaccinations, etc., resulted in what at best could be considered mixed results, since the committee did not take into account difficulties, such as financial ones, that would prevent parents from being able to follow the advice. The results of this work proves this chapter's argument of how the NU, through WSIC, was not always successful in achieving its goals to improve education for black children, even though it undoubtedly raised awareness with black parents about the issue.

Paying a personal tax, having proper clothing, and obtaining vaccinations, represented just a few of the reasons why fifty percent of black children did not attend school.[196] Some of the other reasons included children working to support their families or staying home to care for younger siblings or sick family members. For very young children not attending school, it is likely that the NU referred them to the Gate City Free Kindergarten, which Lugenia Hope helped found, or one of the other four black kindergartens operating in the region. No compulsory education law existed in early twentieth century Atlanta, thus many poor, working-class families

[194] "Tenth Meeting of the Women's Social Improvement Committee," NUC, Box 4, AUC; "West Side Group Starts Health Campaign," *Atlanta World*, May 10, 1931.
[195] Ibid.
[196] Bayor, *Race and the Shaping of Twentieth Century Atlanta*, 198

considered the public education system to be either optional or a privilege they simply could not afford.[197]

At the WSIC's September 2 meeting, Lugenia Hope reported about their August presentation of its petition to the Board of Education and related to the committee the successes achieved. Minutes from this meeting reveal that one board member moved for the filing of the petition and two board members objected to it but stated something should be done about the issues that the petition presented. As a result of the petition presentation at the August board meeting, the Board agreed to send a plumber to two schools for repairs and to provide a school for the South Atlanta and Pittsburg neighborhoods.[198] Sending a plumber directly relates to the concern for stopping the spread of disease from the black to the white community, as overflowing and non-working toilets bred disease that could cross the color line. These promises support the argument that the NU achieved mixed results in its efforts to improve black schools. The Board's agreement to provide a new school for the South Atlanta and Pittsburg neighborhoods is certainly a significant achievement that would bring about real change for black students in those areas. The agreement to send the plumber to two schools for repairs represents a less successful, more underwhelming achievement, since plumbing repairs on just two of the many schools that needed better bathroom facilities was not an effective solution for a problem with such a wide scope. Furthermore, results were mixed at best, since two of the WSIC's major requests, the abolishment of double sessions and better working conditions for black teachers, failed to be granted. Although a small achievement, the Board of Education's promise to send a plumber to two schools for bathroom repairs represented an initial start for improvements to black educational facilities, and one could argue that the petition did succeed in

[197] Dittmer, *Black Georgia in the Progressive Era*, 116.
[198] Ibid.

bringing attention to the issue of poor conditions in black schools, not only with the Board members, but with the general public through the article in the *Atlanta Constitution* and WSIC's work educating the black public about school enrollment

In October, the WSIC members involved with the petition reported to the rest of the WSIC about their meetings with individual councilmen. Although some committee members did not have luck reaching their councilman, others reported they did and had good news to share. A Mrs. Greenwood visited Claude L. Ashby and he declared, "He was a friend of the negroes [sic] and was already working on some of the conditions in the negro [sic] schools."[199] Hope and a Mrs. Harris visited Councilman John H. Harwell, the representative for the ward that housed the West End. He showed interest in the conditions of the schools and agreed to set an appointment to discuss the matter with the committee. Walter Rich, councilman, expressed concern about the lack of a school in South Atlanta; he agreed to telephone the Board of Education about the matter.[200] Superintendent William M. Slayton also expressed interest in the work of the women and he believed much good would come from it in the end. The true extent of these men's support is unclear, since most whites believed educated African Americans resulted in social, political, and economic challenges.[201] Whites feared that higher-educated blacks became more ambitious, infringing on similar interests as whites.[202] Though the true extent is unknown, the fact that several of these men during these meetings seemed concerned about the lack of a school and then ultimately granted the request for a new school shows that the WSIC's work to have these individual meetings likely helped to influence and bring about the achievement of the committee's goal. It cannot be said with certainty if these meetings directly caused the

[199] Minutes, "Ladies Social Improvement Committee," October 1913, NUC, Box 4, AUC.
[200] Ibid.
[201] Litwack, *Trouble in Mind*, 92.
[202] Ibid.

securement of the new school, but at the very least, they likely helped. The format of this request—black women beseeching to the white male power structure—is an example of the WSIC women's strategy of taking on the white male power structure to bring about change, and in this case, it appears the strategy worked.

In addition to meeting with councilmen the women of WSIC also met with the Board of Lady Visitors in order to spread their message about achieving improvements in black schools. The Board of Lady Visitors consisted of one white woman from each ward who visited schools, learned about student/teacher relations and behaviors, and reviewed the teacher's method of instruction. At the end of each school term, the Lady Visitors wrote a report and sent it to the Board of Education.[203] From the WSIC, a Mrs. Ross and a Miss King met with a Miss Brown of the all-white Board of Lady Visitors regarding the congestion at Mitchell, Roach, and Grey Street Schools. Miss Brown said her organization had been trying to help, but that the only way to obtain results was to keep pressuring the men.[204] By men, she meant the governing bodies of the city of Atlanta: the mayor, Board of Education, and City Council members. White women could exert much influence over their family members or contacts with influential white men, yet they could not directly make a difference, since they could not vote or hold public office. They could only pass on recommendations, with white men holding the decision-making positions. Although white women had more political power than black women, both races of women lived within a white patriarchal power structure through which women's strategic navigation could

[203] *Twenty-First Annual Report of the Board of Education,* Atlanta, GA, 1893, Google Books, https://books.google.com/books?id=yV8lAQAAIAAJ&pg=RA6-PA5&lpg=RA6-PA5&dq=board+of+lady+visitors+atlanta&source=bl&ots=fM5DXkKbrN&sig=Jp_pLbA9Qa-6i6RS931UwZaRqL0&hl=en&sa=X&ved=0CB0Q6AEwAGoVChMIvarBr42ByQIVijUmCh096AzW#v=onepage&q=board%20of%20lady%20visitors%20atlanta&f=false [accessed November 8, 2015].
[204] Minutes, "Ladies Social Improvement Committee," October 1913, NUC, Box 4, AUC.

result in achieving of goals.[205] The Board of Lady Visitors agreed to attend the WSIC meeting at the end of October 1913 to further discuss how to bring about improvements to black schools.

At the following October 28, 1913 meeting, the WSIC presented their findings to the Board of Lady Visitors. Unfortunately, of this group only the chairwoman, a Mrs. Pickett, attended. Though only one member of the Board attended, the fact that it sent the chairwoman shows that the organization likely took concern for the matter, demonstrating that though not directly their problem, white women did take the matter of black childhood education seriously. The WSIC women made a presentation to Mrs. Pickett about child life in black Atlanta. They discussed the work of the committee, how it originated, and the benefit of proper education for children. A Mrs. Greenwood spoke about children's home life and a Mrs. Johnson about the conditions in Pittsburg, likely the school nearest her residence as several ladies discussed conditions in their own neighborhood. A Mrs. Redd, stated that overcrowding contributed to children's inability to enroll in school, as the schools simply lacked room for all eligible pupils.[206] Mrs. Pickett responded, reporting that the Board of Education had made arrangements and that in two weeks' time, "they will be ready to do something for the So. Atlanta schools. She said that she wished she could do something but that she was handicapped. She congratulated the ladies on the movement and said that if they were willing to work and to work hard why they would be able to get results quicker."[207] This off-handed compliment implied that the women had not worked hard enough to ensure improved conditions for their schools. Mrs. Pickett's comment suggested that the women needed to work harder to meet their goals, even though the WSIC had worked thoroughly by this point, surveying the public schools, writing a carefully

[205] Gilmore, *Gender and Jim Crow,* 149.
[206] Minutes, Women's Social Improvement Committee, October 28, 1913, NUC, Box 4, AUC.
[207] Ibid.

scripted petition to the members of the Board of Education, the mayor, City Council, white and black ministers, and the Board of Lady Visitors, and personally visited those in power. Whites stereotyped African Americans as "lazy" and Mrs. Pickett's comment demonstrates this stereotype, by dismissing the WSIC's efforts and implying it had not put forth enough effort to obtain results.[208] Thus, although the WSIC achieved success in piquing the interest of the Lady Visitors Board, Mrs. Pickett's characterization of the WSIC demonstrates typical white southern attitudes about African Americans, showing that in this case, the WSIC/NU's strategy of appealing to whites did not bring about desired results.

Mrs. Pickett's conduct at the meeting was influenced by additional race biases. For example, according to the WSIC meeting minutes, Mrs. Pickett "gave the ladies a privilege of asking her questions."[209] Again, this demonstrates the racial constructions of early-twentieth century Atlanta and the South at large, implying the superiority of whites over blacks. For the members of the Women's Social Improvement Committee, it provided an opportunity to present their study and findings to a white woman, but reinforced the idea of African American women's assumed inferiority to whites by forcing them to affirm her superiority as a more knowledgeable resource about the school system in general. Although both white and black women had to yield to white men, the dominant sex during the early 1900s, Mrs. Pickett giving WSIC members the "honor" of asking questions of her demonstrates the belief that black women also had to bow to white women. Thus, African American women, limited by their race and their sex, had to work within a safe space to address both white men and women. The benefit of children provided that safe space. Despite the racial biases of her conduct at the meeting, however, Mrs. Pickett did promise to contact the Board of Education and discuss the meeting she had with the women.

[208] Ibid.
[209] Ibid.

After securing promises from the Board of Education for the plumbing improvements and the establishment of a new school, the WSIC continued its efforts to secure additional improvements for black school children. Yet, the WSIC received a recommendation from the Board of Education and the City Council that the WSIC found so egregious, it expressed its disdain in a letter to the editor of the *Atlanta Constitution*.[210] According to the WSIC's letter, the Board of Education "recommended that the literary course in the Negro schools end with the work of the present sixth grade; that the work of the six grades include industrial work and be distributed over a period of eight years."[211] The Board of Education recommended dropping the traditional seventh and eighth grade courses and replacing them with industrial and vocational educational courses instead; the new program would finish traditional education at the sixth grade. No high school yet existed for black children in Atlanta, so, if passed, vocational classes would become the only form of education for children after the sixth grade.[212] The WSIC believed restricting traditional education at such an early age would hinder children's abilities to eventually join the Talented Tenth, limiting the number of college-prepped students in black Atlanta. The WSIC considered the addition of manual training and domestic science courses for black students an improvement, but not at the expense of losing the seventh and eighth grade literary courses. The WSIC believed ending traditional education at such an early age prevented students from becoming well-informed, responsible adults.

According to the WSIC's letter to the *Atlanta Constitution*, "We are sure that a loss of the seventh and eighth grades would impair the very labor efficiency at which the Board's

[210] Letter to the Editor of the Constitution from the Women's Social Improvement Committee, December 3, 1913, NUC, Box 2, AUC.
[211] Ibid.
[212] Rouse, "The Legacy of Community Organizing,"126; Bayor, *Race and the Shaping of Twentieth Century Atlanta,* 199.

proposal is aiming and this loss would; so limit the Negroes in merely rudimentary education that they would be even less morally and economically efficient than they are now."[213] The WSIC charged that vocational-only training for seventh and eighth grade students would result in a loss of labor power and reduced economic attainment, even though the goal for whites remained keeping blacks in manual labor employments. Appealing politically, they wrote, "Such actions would be fundamentally undemocratic and unjust."[214] Instead, the WSIC recommended the opening of more schools, as students in the seventh and eighth grades had so few options for where to attend school that, if able, they transferred to other school districts that could accommodate them.[215] The letter argued it prejudicial to stop traditional education for black children when white school children received this type of education through high school, demonstrating the markedly differing concerns for black and white education. Claiming to represent the majority of African American Atlantans, the WSIC's letter declared it unfair to deny schooling to the children of black citizens who paid their taxes and, "to confine the Negro population to a peculiar type of education against their will would evidently not be a fair deal and no fair-minded citizens wish to be a party of such discrimination."[216]

The WSIC's letter to the editor was received favorably, as a result, the *Atlanta Constitution* wrote and published an article titled, "Protest Dropping of Literary Course," detailing the NU and the WSIC's concerns. The article specified, "The protest . . . states that the negro [sic] schools need an industrial department, but asserts that the dropping of the literary course above the sixth grades would greatly injure even the work in an added industrial

[213] Letter to the Editor of the Constitution from the Women's Social Improvement Committee, December 3, 1913, NUC, Box 2, AUC.
[214] Ibid.
[215] Ibid.
[216] Ibid.

department."[217] Although the main stream press often denigrated African Americans, the *Atlanta Constitution* often provided favorable reviews of the NU and its programs, often giving them publicity space in its newspaper. In this case, the strategy of appealing to the white press paid off for WSIC, since the publication heeded its letter and wrote an article detailing its cause in response, bringing much needed publicity to the WSIC's platform.

This strategy proved even more successful, as the *Atlanta Constitution's* article brought even more white attention to the WSIC's cause, and more importantly, helped the WSIC to make white allies. Upon reading about the WSIC's concerns in the newspaper, one such ally, Cary B. Wilmer, Rector of St. Luke's Episcopal Church, a white church in Atlanta, wrote his approval for the WSIC's cause in a letter to the "Negro Women's Social Improvement Committee."[218] He stated that he was glad that the city wanted to extend industrial and domestic education to black school children and believed white students should have the same opportunity. He thought, however, cutting the seventh and eighth grades reduced the opportunity of students of "exceptional ability to pursue the higher grades."[219] He wished for the Board of Education to remove this proposal and expressed that they should discuss the matter with black intellectuals, those with more knowledge about the black public school system.[220] No information is provided as to whether Rector Wilmer stated his opinions to the Board of Education, or took a stand on the debate beyond writing this letter, but his letter to the WSIC demonstrates that not all whites favored cutting the seventh and eighth grades, though it also express gender biases of the time,

[217] "Protest Dropping of Literary Course," *Atlanta Constitution*, December 5, 1914 quoting the *Atlanta Constitution,* 1914, NUC, Box 6, AUC.
[218] "Rector Cary B Wilmer, St. Luke's Episcopal Church, to Negro Women's Social Improvement Committee," NUC, Box 2, AUC.
[219] Ibid.
[220] Ibid.

since he discounted their abilities to effect change when he told the women they would achieve more success by appealing to black men to take on the cause.

As a result of their efforts, the WSIC did achieve some success in their campaign against the abolition of traditional schooling for black high school students. After hearing the WSIC's objections and the resulting publicity that followed from their letter to the *Atlanta Constitution,* the city only temporarily dropped the eighth grade in 1914, citing "budget cuts" as the cause.[221] It appears the outcry and debate about this issue lasted for a few years, as additional organizations continued to discuss their disapproval of the school board's decision. One such organization, the "Negro" branch (which included membership from several NU women) of the Atlanta Anti-Tuberculosis Association (ATA), the leading association fighting for the prevention and treatment of tuberculosis in Atlanta, went on record in 1916 stating that they did not favor the dropping of the seventh or eighth grades. The "Negro" Branch of the ATA maintained that as a direct result of a petition sent (created out of the letter sent to the Editor of the *Atlanta Constitution*) to the Board of Education, the Board voted to keep the schools intact up to at least the seventh grade.[222] According to the ATA's statement, the movement against the cutting of the traditional education for older black students gained considerable support. It also conveyed the belief that the black schools, already inadequate for black pupils, would be even further hurt by a restriction of traditional education to the sixth grade only, which would exacerbate the already dire situation of over sixty percent of black children being enrolled in double sessions, which provided them with inadequate educations.[223] It is unclear how many responded to the ATA's

[221] Bayor, *Race and the Shaping of Twentieth Century Atlanta,* 201.
[222] *Annual Report of the Atlanta Anti-Tuberculosis Association: For the Year 1916*, Atlanta Lung Association Collection, (hereafter referred to as ALAC), Box 41, Atlanta History Center (hereafter referred to as AHC); According to Historian Ronald Bayor, the City suspended the eighth grade in 1914. Bayor, *Race and the Shaping of Twentieth-Century Atlanta*, 201.
[223] *Annual Report of the Atlanta Anti-Tuberculosis Association: For the Year 1916*, ALAC, Box 41, AHC.

letter to the editor of the *Atlanta Constitution*, or for whom expressed their disdain for the measure to the Board. Although the WSIC failed in its mission to retain both the seventh and eighth grade, it obtained a partial victory through keeping the seventh grade intact.

The publicity garnered through the WSIC's sharing of its platform, which may have led to the support of other organizations, like the "Negro Branch" of the ATA, may have played a direct role in the board cutting only one grade instead of two In later years, the Board of Education reinstated the eighth grade, which may have been influenced through the "Negro" Branch of the ATA's continued public discussion of the issue, which WSIC may have played a direct role in bringing about due to the publicity it brought to the issue through its efforts. Despite these victories, African American schools in Atlanta remained inadequate and severely overcrowded and as a result, the WSIC continued to campaign for improvements, which yielded some results. As a result of the WSIC's 1913 petition, South Atlanta received a new, small school for black children; additionally, black teachers received an increase in their salaries.[224] Although the new school was not located in the West End, it still benefitted black children, showing that the WSIC's program yielded tangible results for black school children, though in another neighborhood. This small victory for black students again shows success resulting from the WSIC's risky strategy of taking on the whites in power to effect change for black school children. Despite this victory, African American schools remained unsanitary, and the board did nothing to alleviate the overcrowding, nor did they do anything to relieve the strain of double sessions, which for many schools eventually turned into triple sessions in order to provide schooling for as many children as possible, ensuring them at least some education.

[224] Survey of Colored Public Schools (1913-1914), NUC, Box 7, AUC; Rouse, "The Legacy of Community Organizing," 127.

The WSIC disbanded in 1914 for unknown reasons but the Neighborhood Union continued its work in the public school system, by surveying conditions and continuing to battle for improved educational facilities for black youth, often by pressuring white politicians to make needed changes, hoping to keep up the publicity previously garnered by the WSIC.[225] The NU again surveyed many schools in 1914 and 1915, with the surveys revealing more poor conditions. For example, Summerhill School showed a seating capacity of 516, with a first week enrollment of 877. The enrollment after the first week totaled 885.[226] Additionally, they found that almost all students at Summerhill enrolled in double sessions. In the first grade alone, 240 students took double sessions, though the number participating in these double sessions lowered the higher the grade level, likely because of the smaller number of students enrolled in higher grades—the older the student, the higher the possibility that he or she left school to seek employment or for other reasons.

In addition to detailing the conditions for the school children, the NU also reported about the conditions of public school teachers. Teachers in black schools often caught illnesses, either from students, or from exhausting school days, leading to overwork, stress, and emotional and physical strain. NU members instructed their canvassers to interview these teachers' physicians in order to make an estimation of the overall poor health of the teachers, which could be attributed to overburdened, exhausting school days and the unsanitary condition of schools.[227] The NU believed a critical component of its campaign to effect prevention through education included ensuring the good health of teachers. Reaching children and keeping them from lives of crime, disease, and vice, required having an effective teacher healthy enough to perform her

[225] Rouse, "The Legacy of Community Organizing," 127.
[226] Summer Hill School, 1914-1915, NUC, Box 7, AUC.
[227] Ibid.

teaching duties. For this survey, the NU hoped that the poor working conditions of black school teachers would receive attention from those wielding power—the all-male, all-white Board of Education.

The NU concerned itself with the conditions for black school teachers not only because of its concern over the quality of traditional education students would receive from them, but because of the moral virtues it believed these teachers were responsible for instilling as well. The NU believed that the purpose of school was to not only provide a scholastic education, but a moral one as well, and relied on teachers to provide this dual education. A letter to school educators from the National Association of Colored Women, an association to which many NU members were affiliated, argued, "As a public school teacher, you are responsible in the highest degree for the intellectual training of our future men and women. By the daily contact with these children, you know more of the real needs of our race than any other group of leaders."[228] Teachers' roles as dual educators demonstrated the importance of their influence in helping to raise successful black adults. In addition to traditional education, teachers taught morality and patriotism, the necessity of hard work, cleanliness, and thrift, habits necessary for citizenship, often neglected in the home.[229] Thus, by fusing educational tactics for home health and a traditional education, keeping teachers healthy remained a pivotal aspect of improving school conditions. Unfortunately, the health of teachers would require individual efforts at remaining healthy, as the school board did nothing to alleviate the over-crowding, which caused congestion, or reduce her workload, causing exhaustion leading to illness.

[228] National Association of Colored Women, Susie Dyson Morse (Superintendent of School Teachers' League) to Principal and Teachers, 1914, NUC, Box 2, AUC.
[229] Litwack, *Trouble in Mind*, 70-7.

In addition to directly petitioning the white male power structure, the Neighborhood Union set its sights higher, by indirectly working to shape politics via the power of organization. An example of this indirect shaping of politics is the NU's work to influence voters in local elections, in which it used its power to stymy those who opposed improvements in education for African American youths. In 1919, the city put forth a bond issue that made no provision for the funding of black education. The resolution declared an election for deciding on the bond issue, which would occur on April 23, 1919, in which voters would decide whether or not to increase property taxes at a rate twenty-five cents per every one hundred dollars of property.[230] If residents approved the measure, "$0.50 on the hundred dollars thereof will be . . . solely and exclusively be used for the public."[231] In theory, this proposal, directed at raising funds to be used for the public good sounds promising, but the NU opposed it on the grounds that it did not specifically state that blacks would benefit from the increased tax collection.

When African Americans protested the bond, the Board of Education formally went on record stating that no such endowment from the bond's raised funds would be applied to black schools.[232] As a result, the black community, spearheaded by the local branch of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), which included many members of the NU (also members of the NAACP or sympathizers of the movement), rallied against the bond. Moreover, due to the strong support in the black community for defeating the bond, black women formed the Women's Registration Committee, a committee devoted to getting blacks to register to vote so they could vote to defeat the bond, headed by Lugenia Hope, also an NAACP

[230] Bond Issue, *City Records*, Vol. 26, March 20, 1919, 491.
[231] Ibid.
[232] Sarah Mercer Judson, "Building the New South City: African American and White Clubwomen in Atlanta, 1895-1930, (PhD. diss., 1997), 204.

member.[233] The NU, Women's Registration Committee, and other middle-class blacks canvassed their neighborhoods and urged those who had paid their poll tax to vote against the bond. This work shows that though disenfranchised, black women (and white women alike) because of the enormous power they held over their husbands and the community, could influence the vote of men. In this case, these women used their sway to convince many men to vote against the bond. Owing to the hard work of political canvassing, the bond was defeated.

Though the NU expended much effort to improve conditions for black students, it did not restrict its educational work to just children and also worked to improve educational opportunities for black adults. In 1920, in conjunction with the Board of Education, the NU hosted a series of classes designed to combat illiteracy in African American adults. These classes proved important for the improvement of the black community, as the NU recognized adult literacy education as one key to promoting racial uplift.[234] For example, literacy improved African American lives, by enabling them to read and sign contracts, to have a fair share in business dealings, to learn about local, national, and world events, to garner some political freedoms, and to, most significantly, teach their own children about the value of education.[235] Although the NU primarily focused on motherhood and childhood in its platform, it knew that helping adults attain literacy would indirectly benefit it main audience, mothers and children, as well by creating knowledgeable adults who could pass down what they learned to their children, teaching them the value and importance of education. It is unclear why the Board of Education cared so little for black childhood education but subsequently sponsored adult literacy courses under the direction of the Neighborhood Union. It is also unclear how long the Board of

[233] Ibid.
[234] Gaines, *Uplifting the Race*, 1.
[235] Tera Hunter, *To 'Joy My Freedom,* 40-2.

Education and the Neighborhood Union united to run these adult literacy courses, but nonetheless, the inclusion of adult literacy classes proved monumental for the black community, and regardless of the Board of Education' motives, the active involvement of the NU with white policymakers paid dividends, demonstrating one success of the NU's strategy of building relationships with white policymakers to achieve its goals..

As of July of 1920, the NU's adult literacy classes had established a high enrollment rate, with 914 African Americans, ages eighteen to seventy-eight, attending.[236] Because of the success of this program, the NU established two permanent night classes for black adults. In 1910, black Georgians had illiteracy rates of thirty-eight percent; that number fell to twenty-nine percent in 1920.[237] The NU's literacy courses at least partly resulted from a movement throughout the South promoting education of its citizens, as "the thirteen Southern States leads in illiteracy." Discussions at an educational conference in Dallas, Texas in 1922, show how literacy campaigns had become a region-wide movements as it was stated there that education represented a common good for all, "A nation can be no stronger than its most illiterate groups, just as a chain is no stronger than its weakest link."[238] Although it is unclear if members of the NU attended this conference, they kept the primer for the conference in their files and therefore likely had familiarity with what was discussed there.[239] The NU's efforts toward increasing black literacy rates for black adults in Atlanta represented a microcosm of the region-wide movement to improve the literacy of African American adults taking place during this time period.

[236] "Work Among Negro Illiterates," *Atlanta Constitution*, July 11, 1920.
[237] "Negro Education- its Trend," An Address before The White Interdenominational School of Missions, Dallas, Texas, September 24, 1922, NUC, Box 7, AUC.
[238] Ibid.
[239] Untitled: Introduction, NUC, Box 12, AUC.

Following its new focus on improving literacy rates for black adults, the Neighborhood Union returned to its roots of focusing on educational reform for children in 1921, the year a bond similar to the 1919 bond appeared on the ballot in Atlanta. This city bond pledged four million dollars to schools, but like the preceding bond, made no provision for the funding of African American schools.[240] The proposed bond was one of several up for approval, with each of which proposing: a $4,000,000 appropriation for public schools; $1,250,000 for sewer systems; $750,000 for the construction of a bridge over Spring Street in downtown Atlanta; and a $2,850,000 bond for the Department of Water Works.[241] The entire amount submitted to voters for approval added up to $8,850,000.[242]

To defeat the educational bond that did not pledge fund for black schools, middle-class blacks canvassed once again, but this time caught the attention of the Board of Education, mayor, and white voters. As a result of the NU and other middle-class blacks' work, policymakers revised the bond to appropriate $1,250,000 of the $4,000,000 to black schools. The amount pledged to black schools reflected the population of Atlanta—approximately one-third of the money went to schools for the one-third (black) population of Atlanta. It can be argued that those in power recognized the political clout that blacks could effect, as they saw with the defeat of the previous property tax bond, and as a result, knew they needed to make a change to the bond's allocations if they wanted voters to approve it. Additionally, the mayor, realizing the weight African Americans could play in local elections, likely in an attempt to secure support for the bond from the black community, promised to use the bond funds to construct an African American high school, a mighty achievement since no public high school for black students yet

[240] By Finance Committee, City Records, Vol. 27, June 6, 1921, 239.
[241] To the Honorable Jon A. Boykin, City Records, Vol. 27, March 21, 1921, 179.
[242] P.M. Inman, Chairman of the Bond Committee- File, Vol. 27, April 4, 1921, 189; Garrett, *Atlanta and Environs,* 779.

existed in Atlanta.[243] The creation of a public high school would allow the Talented Tenth to expand their numbers with a plethora of new educated teenagers. Thus, black political canvassers heavily rallied in favor for the educational bond, working to secure it passage, as it provided a substantial opportunity to improve educational facilities for black children.

Mayor James L. Key also played an important role as supporter of the bond, by recognizing the influence of black women, who now had additional clout, not just as influencers of men's public opinion, but as new voters. Key wanted a different result than the failed 1919 bond issue and rallied black women to his cause. Before the vote for the bond took place, he created the Colored Women's Committee to oversee the election in African American neighborhoods.[244] The bond election of 1921 demonstrated the pivotal role African American voters could play in local elections. Although disenfranchised by the white primary in national and state elections, white Atlantans rarely prevented blacks from voting in local elections. African American women, now with voting power, switched their votes and, with widespread support from the black community, the bond passed. White women also supported the education bond in large numbers and black women, to an extent, worked with white women to ensure the bond's passage. In their respective wards, white and black women rallied, canvassing homes, and arranging trips for women to register and vote.[245] Although they did not directly work together, black and white women used similar strategies in their promotion of the bond, showing how their motherhood influenced their voting activities. White women rallied behind the educational measure because by this time, white students began to suffer the same problems as black children. The 1919 bond defeat, along with a population explosion in Atlanta owing to rural

[243] Nancy C. Curtis, *Black Heritage Sites: The South*, (The New Press, 1998), 101.
[244] Judson, "Building the New South City," 227.
[245] Ibid.

migrants moving to cities, caused problems in white schools, such as overcrowding, which forced many white schools to form double sessions to accommodate the population boom.[246] African Americans, including many members of the NU, used their power to rally support for and vote in local elections to prevent politicians from ignoring black education. The NU and others obtained success in achieving their goals for both the 1919 and 1921 bond measures, ensuring that some educational improvements for black youth would occur. The NU's relationship with Mayor Key, the participation of white women, and blacks' political canvassing yielded some results for black children, showing how the NU's strategies succeeded.

Despite the over one million dollars pledged to it in the bond, the black public school system never received the full amount of money promised to it, yet the bond money it received did fund the construction of five new schools—including David T. Howard Middle School and Booker T. Washington High School, the first middle and high schools in Atlanta for African American youth.[247] Additionally, during the same year, the city constructed eighteen new white and black schools, including three new black elementary schools: William H. Crogman Elementary on West Avenue, Edwin P. Johnson Elementary on Martin Street, and Edmund Asa Ware elementary on W. Hunter Street.[248] The passing of the bond demonstrates how the NU used their standing in the community to garner funds for the black community from a reluctant white-run city government. The Neighborhood Union experienced great success by helping to secure the allocation of funds for black schools, but the city's failure to provide the entirety of the promised funds resulted in continued poor conditions in black schools. Despite these victories, the black public school system remained horribly inadequate with overcrowding and

[246] Ibid., 219.
[247] Garrett, *Atlanta and Environs,* 796.
[248] Ibid.

the continuance of using double sessions. In addition, the number of newly built black schools was not enough to adequately address the issues of overcrowding, as a result these new schools suffered from same overcrowding problems as their predecessors, with not enough classrooms or desks for their student populations, subsequently diminishing the significance of the bond money won in the election.

Ten years after the WSIC's initial 1913 petition, Atlanta schools remained dangerously overcrowded. Although some conditions had improved, the number of existing schools and their seating capacities could not meet the demands of such a large sector of the population. Therefore, on September 29, 1923, the new mayor, Mayor Walter Sims, the City Council, the President of the Board of Education along with the entire Board of Education, and Willis A. Sutton, Superintendent of the City Public Schools, received another petition.[249] This petition presented the findings of a "Citizens' Committee," a conglomeration of the black middle-class, whose members included NU members and affiliates, but also included prominent black citizens and black-business owners. In this petition, the committee drew comparisons between the conditions in 1913 and 1923. .[250]

The latter petition, far more detailed than the 1913 petition, listed statistics regarding black enrollment in the public school system. These statistics were found through fact-finding surveys of the black public schools. Some examples of these statistics include: data for the spring of 1923, during which the city had 52,000 public school-age children with African American children comprising 17,750 (34 percent) of this number.[251] Actual enrollment rates did

[249] Petition to his Honor, the Mayor of Atlanta; Honorable Walter Sims and the members of the City Council; To the Honorable W.W. Gaines, President, and members of the Board of Education; to Professor W.A. Sutton, Superintendent of the Public Schools from the Citizens Committee, November 29, 1923, NUC, Box 6, AUC.
[250] Ibid.
[251] Ibid.

not match the 52,000 number since not all school-age children actually attended school, and even so, public schools did not have enough seating to accommodate all enrolled students. The petition cited that "all children enrolled cannot be accommodated even for part-time instruction by the use of the unsatisfactory and baneful double session."[252] Data from the petition showed that some of these schools even resorted to triple sessions, in which the teacher taught three, two and a half hour classes per day, extending the school day until 4:30 PM. These schools had 9,028 children enrolled in the double sessions and 727 enrolled in triple sessions. Each of the schools' 159 teachers taught an average of seventy-two children per day. Of the entire population of enrolled students, only 203 children received a full day's education. The petition also detailed that black schools had only 4,877 seats for the 11,469 enrolled students—showing that a mere 42 percent of students had seating. Ten years earlier, black schools' seating capacity could hold 4,102 of the total 6,163 students— a 67 percent seating capacity, demonstrating how the congestion in black public schools had worsened over the subsequent ten years.[253] This decline in seating capacity demonstrates the urgency of the overcrowding situation, the impact of migration, and the desperate need for improvements to the black school system.

Additionally, the petition included various statistics on each black school, including the number of rooms, seats available, number of students enrolled, number of teachers, and how many students studied for the full day, in double sessions, or in triple sessions. For example, Yonge Street School had eight rooms with a seating capacity of 468, but had 1,080 students enrolled—a 43 percent seating capacity. This school double-sessioned all students through the fifth grade, which meant 1,048 of the 1,080 students at this school only received a half day of

[252] Ibid.
[253] Survey of Colored Public Schools (1913-1914), NUC, Box 7, AUC; Elisabeth Lasch-Quinn, *Black Neighbors*, 123.

schooling each day. One teacher had a class with 147 students with the classroom only having seats for sixty children. Ashby Street School had thirteen rooms that had 629 seats available for the 1,551 enrolled students—a 40 percent seating capacity. Twenty-two teachers taught 1,108 students in double sessions and 223 students in triple sessions. Only eighty students attended full-time, likely representing one class in one grade. At the beginning of the academic year, this school had two grades with no teachers and at the time of the petition, two weeks into the school year, the two grades still did not have teachers.[254] It is unlikely that any white schools in the district went without teachers for any grade of students, since the 1921 bond money provided millions of dollars for the provision of white public schools.

Yonge Street School: Figure A

	Enrollment	Total Students Enrolled
Single Session (Full Day)	Unknown	1,080
Double Session	1,048	1,080
Triple Session	Unknown	1,080

[254] Petition to his Honor, the Mayor of Atlanta; Honorable Walter Sims and the members of the City Council; To the Honorable W.W. Gaines, President, and members of the Board of Education; to Professor W.A. Sutton, Superintendent of the Public Schools from the Citizens Committee, November 29, 1923, NUC, Box 6, AUC.

Ashby Street School- Figure B

	Enrollment	Total Students
Seating Capacity	629	1,551
Full-Time	80	1,551
Double Session	1,108	1,551
Triple Session	223	1,551

This data shows that the addition of new schools from the bond money did not solve the overcrowding problem. William H. Crogman Elementary, a new school created by the 1921 bond money, replaced the old, unsanitary Pittsburg School, and experienced the same overcrowding problem as the older black schools. By replacing a new school with an older one and failing to add an additional school, Crogman Elementary had to address the shortage of seats at the old Pittsburg School, which compounded by the addition of new students, having only 630 seats for 1,340 students. As a result, some students sat on boxes or boards. One teacher had 138 students in one class, another 128. In the seventh grade, students sat two to a seat. Despite being a newly constructed school, it also had subpar conditions. For example, when the school opened,

it had no water connections, and as a result, children urinated behind trees.[255] The inability of the city government to provide adequate lavatories for children at a brand new school represented the city government's neglect of black schools. According to the "Citizens' Committee," petition, "On September the 19th a committee representing the NU and the City Federation of Colored Women's Clubs…offered to make, at their expense, temporary provision for the relief of this embarrassing situation, but their offer was refused."[256] All new schools had such overcrowding that they used their new cafeterias, libraries, and manual training rooms for classrooms, instead of for their intended usage, demonstrating how the bond money did not alleviate the overcrowding in black public schools. In some aspects, such as replacing new schools for old ones, the Board actually increased overcrowding for many schools. Thus, the success of the 1921 bond victory was marred by the city's refusal to adequately invest in the construction and care of new black schools.

Though the overcrowding was in part because of the neglect of the city to provide adequate facilities, the overcrowding in black schools also resulted from the "Other Great Migration," a movement happening during this time period throughout the South.[257] In this migration, people left rural areas in droves, heading for southern urban centers where more opportunities existed. The Other Great Migration resulted in an influx of new students, both black and white, making seating difficult in both types of schools.

The Citizens' Committee, to which many NU women or NU husbands held membership, argued that children's inability to obtain education from subpar schools often resulted from this migration. When a child could not enroll because of the school's overcrowding, the child was

[255] Ibid.
[256] Ibid.
[257] Bernadette Pruitt, *The Other Great Migration: The Movement of African Americans to Houston, 1900-1941* (College Station: Texas A &M University Press, 2013), 1-5.

unable to have a fair opportunity in life, and a feeling of panic overcame the parents. The petition made suggestions for how to alleviate the overcrowding of black Atlantan schools: converting Walker Street School and Davis Street School from white to black schools. Located in black neighborhoods, these schools had low enrollment rates and a low student to teacher ratios. The petitioners also recommended the erection of portable buildings as annexes for overcrowded schools. The petition concluded that, "We are confident that these conditions simply need to be brought to your attention to secure your sympathetic interest and active effort for their relief. We believe your desire and purpose is that all the children of the city shall be properly and adequately provided for."[258] Again, petitioners attempted to appeal to the Board altruistically, only expressing concern for the learning environment of black children. Moreover, they did not frame their complaints as accusations of failure on the part of the whites in power, instead citing ignorance as a cause. They hoped framing their petition in this way would result in whites granting their requests.

This language is strikingly different than the 1913 public school survey, where the petitioners begged for increased provisions and appealed to white society's fears of disease, shiftlessness, and crime. Instead, the Citizens' Committee made stronger assertions and expressed their expectations that the city would make the requested changes. The petition had the backing of some of the most prominent black citizens in the city.[259] Several women signed the petition, but the majority presence of men as the petition signees demonstrates that the committee women may have tried to use the strength and political clout of black men to bolster

[258] Ibid

[259] Ibid. They included, Heman Perry, Chairman, and head of the Standard Life Insurance Company; Dr. and Mrs. C.C. Cater, grocer and NU member; Jesse O. Thomas of the Urban League; a Mrs. Bowen, First Vice President of the City Federation of Women's Clubs; John H. Lewis, President of Morris Brown University; Dr. John Hope; Reverend A.D. Williams (Martin Luther King Jr.'s grandfather), and husband of NU member, J.C. Williams, and Mr. Charles Shaw of the Atlanta Anti-Tuberculosis Association.

its request.[260] In most social welfare or reform organizations, black men held top leadership positions, while women performed the daily work and usually served as secretaries or treasurers.[261] Thus, it is likely women spear-headed the canvassing of schools and compiled the statistics for this petition, while black, male, middle-class professionals served as the face of the petition. After receiving such a paltry response to the WSIC's 1913 petition, the black community may have tried to highlight the black male professional support to bring gravity to the issue as another tactic for improving educational facilities. The variety of professions among the signees shows the wide reaching support for the petition by African American residents, demonstrating the popularity of the movement outside of the NU. Nonetheless, the petition yielded few results. The failure of this petition demonstrates how the NU's risky strategy of appealing to the white male power structure often yielded mixed results, with the result of this NU-related petition resulting in failure, as the powers that be did not respond favorably to it

Despite this failure, the black community remained undeterred and continued to fight for improved conditions in black schools. An unknown group, possibly the Citizen's Committee or the Neighborhood Union, as the NU's files contained details regarding the petition in its records, conducted an additional survey of black schools in January 1924, with the aim of finding out more statistics about the conditions in these schools. The survey documented data about enrollment rates, available seating, number of classrooms, number of teachers, and number of students enrolled in full-time sessions, two and a half hour sessions, three and a half hour sessions, or four hour sessions in each school.[262] The canvassers surveyed thirteen schools with a total enrollment of 12,570 and a seating capacity of 6,096—a 48 percent seating capacity. Only

[260] Ibid.
[261] Susan Smith, *Sick and Tired of Being Sick and Tired: Black Women's Health Activism in America*, (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1995), 1.
[262] Public School Survey: School Report, January 22, 1924, NUC, Box 7, AUC.

149 rooms held 176 teachers who taught these students, with only 215 students enrolled full-time. Double session students equaled 8,369, (three and a half hour class periods) and triple session students equaled 2,632 (two and a half hour per day classes); 956 students at five different schools took four hour classes.[263] The schools ranged in size from forty-eight students at W. Oakland School (all seated and likely a one-room, one-teacher school) to 2,180 at Edmund Asa Ware Elementary, one of the new schools constructed after the 1921 bond election. Ware elementary, because of crowded conditions, separated instruction into morning and afternoon classes, having 1,393 enrolled in morning classes and 790 enrolled in afternoon classes. They had neither full-time students, nor students taking the traditional double session. Instead, students learned in either two and a half hour classes or four hour classes. The new junior high school, David T. Howard Junior High, enrolled 1,468 students while having only 900 seats. All students took double sessions.[264] Thus, four months after the construction of the petition by the Citizen's Committee, black schools remained grossly overcrowded and unable to provide adequate instruction for the black public school children of Atlanta, highlighting the failures of the Board of Education to seriously consider the Citizen's Committee's petition. The black community received no explanation for the gross neglect of brand new schools that cost tax-payer dollars to raise, but poor construction and planning, and a general carelessness for the education of black youths resulted in the lack of improvements in educational facilities. Data from this additional, possibly NU-written petition thus further proves that the 1921 bond allocation resulted in some achievements, such as the construction of five new schools, but in failures as well, due to the refusal by the city to disburse all of the promised bond money resulting in few changes for black youth. Subsequently, the success of the 1921 bond victory was partially muted by the inability of

[263] Ibid.
[264] Ibid.

white policymakers to seriously consider adequate assistance for black public schools. This outcome is an example of the mixed results the NU achieved using its strategy of confronting the white, male power structure to effect change, as the 1923 did not yield any results.

The 1930 Census provided some nationwide statistics regarding black educational attainment. The Census revealed that African Americans comprised 9.7 percent of the population, totaling 11,891,143 individuals. Of that total, almost half (5,193,913) lived in urban areas, showing the impact of the massive migration from the countryside to cities occurring across the country.[265] African Americans had a 16.3 percent illiteracy rate, compared with the 1.5 percent rate of the native white population and 9.9 percent rate of the foreign-born population.[266] The number of African Americans aged five to twenty totaled 4,128,998, with 60 percent (2,477,311) enrolled in school. Comparatively, 71.8 percent of school-aged whites attended school. The total number of black schools across the United States equaled 24,079. Of those, 63.8 percent still consisted of one-teacher schools, largely attributed to the heavy rural population, where one room, dilapidated log cabins typically scattered across non-urban areas. Two-teacher schools comprised 18.8 percent of black schools, making 82.6 percent of all black schools having only one or two teachers.[267] This represented both the heavy rural population and the inability of urban policy-makers to make adequate provisions for black education. Rural students suffered the most disproportionately. According to the Census, "Many Negro schools are badly over-crowded and in rural districts. Negro children frequently walk excessive distances to school."[268] Children often walked miles to run-down, one-room school houses. Even with their

[265] Some Statistics on Negro Schools: Census of 1930, Atlanta University Presidential Records- John Hope, Box 179, AUC; Pruitt, *The Other Great Migration,* 5.
[266] Some Statistics on Negro Schools: Census of 1930, Atlanta University Presidential Records- John Hope, Box 179, AUC.
[267] Ibid.
[268] Ibid.

restrictions (such as helping with share-cropping and farming), education remained critical and children walked these long-distances to obtain an education.

For all schools in the country, the average class size per teacher for white schools equaled thirty students; for black schools, forty-five. Black teachers faced more difficulties, having to teach larger classes, while receiving less pay than their white counterparts. Having 50 percent higher class sizes than white children made it difficult for black children to receive an education of the same standard, resulting in less individual attention given per student. The report estimated that black schools needed an additional 5,990 classrooms for black schools.[269] These statistics show that the problems black Atlantans encountered in their surveys of the black educational system in Atlanta represented a nationwide trend of separate, yet inherently unequal, educational facilities.

The Census data also revealed that the South experienced a striking shortage of high schools for black students. In 1929, 292 southern counties with at least a 12.5 percent African American population did not have a high school for black students. Although a shortage still existed, the South had made great progress with creating black high schools, as evidenced by the number of these schools increasing from sixty-four in 1916 to 831 by 1928.[270] The massive increase in the number of high schools reflected the nationwide movement for increasing higher education opportunities for black teenagers that took place during this time period.[271] This increase in the establishment of black high schools across the South allowed many teenagers to further their education, and as a result, enabling them to take steps toward joining the Talented Tenth. Through education, blacks could become leaders of their race and bring about racial uplift

[269] Ibid.
[270] Ibid.
[271] Paul E. Peterson, *The Politics of School Reform, 1870-1940* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1985), 60-63.

by using their positions to spread middle-class values to less fortunate members of their race.[272] Even with the number of high schools for blacks climbing, the total number, however, remained grossly inadequate, since the number of students in the first four grades for African Americans totaled 73.2 percent, compared with 53.1 percent of white students, demonstrating a higher percentage of white students enrolled in the sixth grade and beyond.[273] More black children in the lower grades may explain why so few black high schools existed, and the smaller percentage of older black students may owe to many older black children giving up school in favor of working.[274]

The Census data also revealed a marked difference in the number of school days per year and the total attendance rates of white and black children. The data does not include how many daily hours students attended school, since, as shown, a striking percentage of students enrolled in double or even triple sessions, although statewide figures are not available. The school term for white children typically lasted eight months (162 days) and six and a half months for African Americans (132 days). White students attended an average of 128 days but African American only ninety-seven days.[275] The shorter school term and lower attendance rates for black students is likely attributed to the higher percentage of these children living in rural areas and the trend of black students more often than their white counterparts working part time or full time jobs. For those living in rural areas, the harvest season affected children's abilities to attend school, as it required the contributions of the entire family; therefore, sharecroppers and tenants often had their children miss school to work on the farm during key periods of the annual growing

[272] Higginbotham, *Righteous Discontent,* 43-5.
[273] Some Statistics on Negro Schools: Census of 1930, Atlanta University Presidential Records- John Hope, Box 179, AUC.
[274] Carole Hunter Senn, "The Rural Schools of Laurens County, South Carolina, 1918 to 1950," (PhD diss., University of South Carolina, 2006), 137.
[275] Higginbotham, *Righteous Discontent,* 43-5.

season.[276] Sharecropping and tenancy, predominantly African American occupations, explains the shorter attendance days for black rural schools. In addition, with the severe overcrowding of black schools, thousands of students failed to receive a full days' instruction, as demonstrated through Atlanta statistics provided by the WSIC and the Citizen's Committee.

The level of education black schools afforded did serve to provide training and education for the masses, although schools suffered from overcrowding and meager resources. Across the country, 47,426 certified African American teachers taught in schools.[277] Of these teachers, 18,130 held less than a high school education. Many of these teachers taught in rural schools, where the teachers often had only a little more education and training than the students they taught.[278] Black teachers having fewer than two years of college experience numbered 9,431. Over 15,000 black teachers had at least two years of college training or an equivalent, while 4,422 had a B.S. degree or equivalent.[279] No mandate existed for the number of educational years required for a teacher. Conversely, white Americans (except the very poor), demanded teachers with high levels of education for their children. African Americans, however sought any black teacher who possessed the ability to teach, regardless of educational attainment. The Census data also revealed that, in 1930, the average salary for black one-room school teachers equaled $314.00 for 123 days (six months) work. Regarding educational levels achieved, black teachers averaged only two and a half years higher than elementary school level and they typically possessed a median level of teaching experience of four years. Meanwhile, the average salary for

[276] Carole Hunter Senn, "The Rural Schools of Laurens County," 137.
[277] Some Statistics on Negro Schools: Census of 1930, Atlanta University Presidential Records- John Hope, Box 179, AUC.
[278] Ibid.
[279] Ibid.

white one-room school teachers equaled $883.00 for two months more work and most had graduated high school. [280]

The 1930 Census also showed the number of dollars spent per annum on white and black schools across the South. According to historian Ronald H. Bayor, although white students received a higher allocation of funds, the amounts spent on both white children and black children remained highly inadequate throughout the half century.[281] Funding in rates in some states for white versus black students diverged dramatically. States in the lower South reflected egregious differences. Georgia spent $35.42 on each white child and a meager $6.38 on each black school child. Mississippi showed the largest gap between white and black students, with $45.34 spent per white child and only $5.45 per black child.[282] From the Reconstruction period through World War II, Mississippi demonstrated the highest disparity between expenditures on black and white education.[283] The records asserted, "from the foregoing figures it will be seen that the educational opportunity for Negro children measured by expenditure ranges from about one-half to one-ninth of that for white children. (Except Maryland and Oklahoma)."[284] One example of reduced educational expenditures involved most children in the Deep South still learning in small wooden school houses often lacking textbooks. Any available textbooks, usually decades old and authored by whites, typically depicted stereotypical and biased versions of United States' history.[285] To combat the racist notions of inferiority taught in textbooks, black school teachers often inculcated racial pride by highlighting the achievements of prominent

[280] Ibid.
[281] Bayor, *Race and the Shaping of Twentieth Century Atlanta*, 198.
[282] Ibid.
[283] Litwack, *Trouble in Mind*, 108.
[284] Some Statistics on Negro Schools: Census of 1930, Atlanta University Presidential Records- John Hope, Box 179, AUC.
[285] Litwack, *Trouble in Mind*, 75.

African Americans, demonstrating a diverging depiction of African Americans than the stereotypical ones presented in textbooks.[286]

The records blamed income distribution across the United States for playing a heavy role in the South's lack of adequate educational facilities and opportunities. Regionally, per capita income in the North reached $3,088 and $3,609 in the West and other non-southern regions. The South showed drastically reduced economic attainment, with only $1,785 per capita income.[287] The report requested, "That the only adequate solution of the Negro education problem must come through FEDERAL AID under which all parts of the country would share more equitably in this large responsibility."[288] Tallied during the Great Depression, educational expenditures on black youth remained grossly inadequate throughout the South. With white supremacists running the southern states and having a strong will to avoid raising taxes, African American children could scarcely see an improvement in their educational facilities without a federal mandate for increased funding.

In the late 1930s, Charles Hamilton Houston, working with the NAACP, began a nationwide effort aimed at state and federal courts to make educational facilities more equitable for African Americans.[289] Initially focusing on higher education, Houston, and his protégé, Thurgood Marshall, obtained many successes and Marshall became the lead attorney in the infamous *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka* case in 1954, which held that, regarding public

[286] Ibid.
[287] Some Statistics on Negro Schools: Census of 1930, Atlanta University Presidential Records- John Hope, Box 179, AUC.
[288] Ibid.
[289] Adam Fairclough, *Better Day Coming: Blacks and Equality, 1890*-2000 (New York: Penguin Books, 2001), 197-201

schools, the "doctrine of 'separate but equal' has no place. Separate educational facilities are inherently unequal."[290]

The U.S. Department of Education issued a report in 1930 that detailed current conditions in white and black public schools across the country by state. For the state of Georgia, 526,023 white children attended school, while 341,963 African American children attended school.[291] The markedly different care that white students received is detailed throughout the report. For example, white students had 363,623 desks available.[292] Although this averages more than one student per desk, it is unknown what hours students attended school, since some poor white children also attended double sessions, although far fewer than black students.[293] It is unlikely that many white students shared desks. Meanwhile, black school children received only 40,408 desks.[294] This small number of desks reflects the high frequency of double and triple sessions and because of the state's unwillingness to provide more seats and schools for African Americans, some students shared or lacked desks. The WSIC and the Citizens' Committee presented the same figures in their 1913 and 1923 petitions. The 1930 Census report shows that schools having more than two teachers numbered 1,626 for white students and 142 for black pupils, and one-teacher schools (typically one room where a teacher taught all grades), numbered 1,120 for whites and 2,654 for blacks, demonstrating both the high rural population of African Americans and the reluctance of cities and the state to construct new schools for black children.[295] In urban areas such as Atlanta, the Board of Education's unwillingness to provide

[290] Ibid., 218-225; "Separate is not Equal: The Brown v. Board of Education," http://americanhistory.si.edu/brown/history/5-decision/courts-decision.html [accessed August 30, 2015].
[291] State of Georgia: Department of Education, 1928-1930: Public Schools, NUC, Box 12, AUC.
[292] Ibid.
[293] Judson, "Building the New South City," 219.
[294] State of Georgia: Department of Education, 1928-1930: Public Schools, NUC, Box 12, AUC.
[295] Ibid.

updated and adequate educational facilities represented part of a region-wide trend affecting the entire state.[296] A combination of factors, including the schools themselves, school term length, amount of money spent per school, the ratio between students and teachers, and teachers' salaries, contributed to black education in the South remaining substandard when compared to the educational opportunities for white students.[297]

Even vocational training that received the support of the City Council and Board of Education in Atlanta also received funding that differed greatly for white training versus black training ($80,282.59 to 4,884.05).[298] State sponsored evening schools typically did not exist, as they received no provision for African American schools, as a mere $62.60 highlighted the amount expended on evening schools. This number likely represented one state-funded school. For whites, however, the state spent $22,079.66 on evening schools. Similar details are also shown for Florida, Georgia's neighboring state.[299] Thus, black and white children went to separate schools and had vastly unequal facilities and chances to excel, as the states spent massively different amounts on educational funding for white and black children.

Years later, in March 1937, the Georgia Teachers and Educational Association released a report regarding black public schools. Taken during the height of the Great Depression, it shows a total of 263,402 African American children enrolled in the public school system, a reduction from the 341,963 enrolled in 1930.[300] This decrease in enrollment demonstrates that the Great Depression hindered educational opportunities for blacks (although no data is shown for white

[296] Some Statistics on Negro Schools: Census of 1930, Atlanta University Presidential Records- John Hope, Box 179, AUC.
[297] Litwack, *Trouble in Mind*, 107.
[298] State of Georgia: Department of Education, 1928-1930: Public Schools, NUC, Box 12, AUC.
[299] State of Florida: Department of Education, 1928-1930: Public Schools, NUC, Box 12, AUC.
[300] "Georgia Teachers and Educational Association," *Herald*, March, 1937, Atlanta University Presidential Records- John Hope, Box 178, AUC; Some Statistics on Negro Schools: Census of 1930, Atlanta University Presidential Records- John Hope, Box 179, AUC.

school children, it is likely their numbers also decreased). The reduction in number of students is representative of the nation at large. Across the country, many children dropped out of school and sought employment to help supplement the family income, stayed home to watch family members, or could not obtain the necessary clothing or vaccinations to attend school. In addition, hundreds of thousands of teenage youths (mostly boys) left home in search of employment or better living conditions.[301] This trend is supported by data showing a higher number of girls remaining in school during the 1935-1936 school year. The report shows that of school children in the eighth through twelfth grades, only 6,568 boys enrolled in classes, compared to 8,871 girls.[302] The report also shows that one-teacher, mostly rural schools still dotted the countryside; of the 3,425 schools available for African American students, an astounding 2,438 only had one school teacher, usually teaching students of all ages in one room.[303] This number had fallen from the 1930 Census, demonstrating the reduction in funding for expenditure on black schools, and the lower attendance rate, especially in rural areas, where farm mechanization had started to uproot many sharecroppers and tenants (exacerbated once the Agricultural Adjustment Act passed in 1933). Fewer than 1,000 black schools in Georgia had more than one teacher, most with only two teachers. The reluctance and avoidance of the state in addressing rural school reform for black youth reflected the general attitude of regional leaders.[304]

Although the NU worked hard to better the condition of African American school children, the reports from the United States' Census and the Georgia Teachers and Educational Association demonstrate that black schools remained grossly inadequate throughout the time

[301] Errol Lincoln Uys, *Riding the Rails: Teenagers on the Move in the Great Depression* (London: Taylor and Francis, 2003).
[302] "Georgia Teachers and Educational Association," *Herald*, March, 1937, Atlanta University Presidential Records-John Hope, Box 178, AUC.
[303] Ibid.
[304] Litwack, *Trouble in Mind*, 101.

period. Though schools in Atlanta remained overcrowded and unsanitary, the NU did have many successes that resulted in some black educational reform. The NU effectively rallied for an increase in black school teachers' salaries, defeated the 1919 bond issue, and influenced the passage of the 1921 bond issue that resulted in the building of several new black schools. In addition, they prevented the ending of the literary curriculum at the sixth grade and ensured provisions for a junior and senior high school

Indeed, the Neighborhood Union helped to shape a change in the West End's black education system, while also bringing about city-wide improvements, such as helping to ensure the creation of new schools outside of the neighborhood. The organization's strategy of directly confronting white male politicians yielded mixed results, with the NU accomplishing much in its institution building efforts, garnering support from both black and white allies, and forcing the city to take some, although not as much as hoped, action. The Neighborhood Union achieved all of these successes by using their risky strategy of taking on the white male power structure, via direct petitioning and using the power of organization to gain political clout strong enough to sway politicians and the popular vote, to bring about these improvements. At times, the NU's efforts failed, such as its attempt to directly take on the white males in power in the 1923 Citizens Committee petition, which the NU likely helped with, not being granted. Its failures do not, however, take away from the many gains the NU helped to achieve for black youth in the public school system.

The most lasting achievement for the West End that came about as a result of the Neighborhood Union's battle for improving educational conditions for black students came with the creation of Booker T. Washington High School, the first black high school in Atlanta, located near the black colleges in the neighborhood. Using its regular strategies for community building,

the NU believed that much like mothers who needed informed strategies achieved through the receipt of preventative education in the home to raise virtuous, dutiful citizens, children needed an academic education to become responsible, informed adults. The NU did everything in its power to ensure that black Atlantans had every available educational opportunity at their disposal, using strategies aimed at instilling fear in white officials to motivate them into approving positive changes for black schools. Whites may have controlled most aspects of society, but the NU's strategy of spreading fears that wayward black youths would contaminate the city with disease, crime, and vice proved a key strategy in the NU's educational battles. Preventing maladies before they occurred remained central to the NU's message, evidenced by their provision of clothes to needy children and urging parents to pay their personal tax and vaccinate their children so that they could attend school. Finally, the NU used the concept of the Talented Tenth to motivate its efforts, attempting to improve education for black youths so that as many of them as possible could become educated members of the black middle-class. The Neighborhood Union believed these new members of the middle-class would lead by example, imparting middle-class values and racial pride to the masses. Aside from educational reform, the black community faced many additional struggles, one of which, the NU, in conjunction with the Atlanta Anti-Tuberculosis Association and several other influential agencies, not only worked to improve, but also proved to be a struggle in which the NU achieved its highest level of success in effecting real change—the battle for improvements in public health for African Americans.

Chapter Three
Improving Public Health: The Neighborhood Union and the Atlanta Anti-Tuberculosis Association, 1908-1919

Louie Shivery, long time secretary and historian for the Neighborhood Union (NU), wrote about the squalid living conditions that contributed to the spread of tuberculosis (TB) in Atlanta. Her particular concern regarded what she called the "neglect" that existed in the West Side. One street in the neighborhood "was a slum, full of holes, mud and debris." Another "terrified even children because of fights, brawls, gambling and killings which were all too frequent occurrences." The city used the neighborhood as a dump for trash, and vehicles could not pass through the area. Other streets in the neighborhood, ones that whites had developed near Atlanta University, Morehouse College, and Spelman Seminary, were better off but not perfect. Streets in the neighborhood did not have water mains and also served as grounds for the "burning of garbage," which produced "stench and smoke." Moreover, prostitutes plied their trade on these neglected, unlit streets. [305]

Through segregation, local governments denied assistance to black neighborhoods that harbored disease because of unsanitary and dangerous living conditions. Atlantan officials complained about the spread of disease and horrid conditions in black neighborhoods, but offered few solutions. Rather than taking accountability for the city's neglect, officials treated the matter as a problem that blacks created, shirking responsibility for the upkeep of these public streets. The city did not collect trash in black areas, and worse, they dumped and burned garbage from rich white neighborhoods in black communities. The city also did not properly drain sewage in these neighborhoods, resulting in blacks frequently drinking water from unhygienic

[305] Louie Davis Shivery, "The Neighborhood Union: A Survey of Social Welfare Movements among Negroes in Atlanta," *Phylon*, vol 3, no.2, (2nd Qtr. 1942): 151.

surface wells. Residents with houses built on uneven terrain regularly suffered from sewage flooding their homes. Unpaved, debris-filled, dimly-lit streets and unscreened privies represented the norm in black communities. Although some poor white neighborhoods experienced similar conditions, all blacks suffered from these poor environments because of living in the same general neighborhoods because of residential segregation. Middle and upper-class blacks lived in either the same neighborhoods as poor blacks or in directly adjacent neighborhoods; therefore, since black neighborhoods uniformly lacked adequate public services, blacks of all classes suffered from the same lack of sanitary conditions. These filthy, substandard homes, streets, and communities naturally became breeding grounds for disease.[306] Contemporary scholars contend that socioeconomic inequalities and substandard housing lay at the heart of transmission of TB.[307]

The relationship and interracial cooperation between the Atlanta Anti-Tuberculosis Association (ATA) and the Neighborhood Union, who worked together to tackle the Atlanta tuberculosis epidemic in black communities highlights this examination of public health care in black Atlanta. This chapter argues that the Neighborhood Union succeeded with health care initiatives because it turned inward and outward. It turned inward by providing health care at its Neighborhood Clinic, giving lecture courses and offering mother's clubs, enacting Clean-Up Campaigns, and participating in National Negro Health Week. It turned outward by forming an alliance with the reputable, and white-run ATA, allowing the NU more power, authority, and access to white politicians. The NU obtained the most success in the realm of public health by

[306] Tera W. Hunter, *To 'Joy My Freedom: Southern Black Women's Lives and Labors after the Civil War* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1997), 45; Jacqueline Rouse, *Lugenia Burns Hope: Black Southern Reformer* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1989), 118; John Dittmer, *Black Georgia in the Progressive Era, 1900-1920* (Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 1977), 11-13.
[307] Samuel Kelton Roberts Jr., *Infectious Fear: Politics, Disease, and the Health Effects of Segregation* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2009), 12.

providing health services the city failed to provide, and aligning with an organization with more clout and influence. Through its adaptability, the NU dramatically altered black access to health care in both the West End and other black neighborhoods in the city.

The Atlanta Anti-Tuberculosis Association, a white-run organization working toward the prevention and treatment of tuberculosis, had little success with prevention through education and other tactics to reach the black community until the Neighborhood Union joined forces with the ATA. The ATA and the NU worked closely together for decades, and over time the organizations used several strategies— some new and some practiced by the NU for decades— designed to prevent and eradicate the disease. The Neighborhood Union never abandoned its commitment to preventing maladies (both social and health) in black communities by providing preventative education designed to teach the community how to stop these conditions before they happened and believed this strategy the best way to reach the masses.

The ATA also used this tactic to address the tuberculosis epidemic, and both associations initially focused their preventative education on women, especially mothers, considered the caregivers of home and race. The NU believed the mother responsible for educating her family with values of public health in order to create healthy future citizens for the race; the ATA, however, chose to focus on mothers simply because it considered mothers a direct link to the black home, which the organization believed to be the fastest avenue for spreading preventative education. A mother educated in preventative educative techniques easily curbed disease from spreading and starting in her own home, thus improving environmental issues in the home, resulting in a quicker attainment of health in the community. Finally, the ATA and NU's work emphasized the significance of black leaders working with other African Americans to bring about change. Since in the antebellum era, where medical consent did not exist, blacks strongly

distrusted white health officials. As a result, the ATA focused on securing black public health workers (such as members of the NU) to work with the black community, as a strategy to make the most impact.

General statistics regarding the nationwide concern about TB sets the stage for this chapter. An examination at the public panic about the disease in both the city of Atlanta and beyond, and by white public health officials, highlighted the need for public health work in black communities. A consideration of the longstanding relationship between the ATA and the NU, existing from almost the inception of the NU, is also discussed. Founded in 1907, the ATA served several purposes: eradicating tuberculosis; next, operating public health clinics; and then cooperating with individuals and organizations to uplift the community. [308] Although not stated, the ATA, like other anti-tuberculosis associations across the country, used surveillance of their patients and potential patients through the dispensaries and visiting white nurses as a mechanism for collecting data to educate the public about the prevention and causes of TB.[309] By 1913, the ATA formed a "Negro Race Committee" and by 1915, a "Negro" branch of the ATA, with Lugenia Hope and other NU members playing a strong role in its creation and production.[310] The NU and the ATA obtained success reaching the black community through both the implementation of clean-up campaigns, National Negro Health Week, and a "Medico-Educational" campaign in 1917. The NU and ATA continued their alliances into the 1920s and early 1930s, and will be discussed in chapter four.

[308] *Sixth Annual Report of the Atlanta Anti-Tuberculosis Association*, 1914, Atlanta Lung Association Collection (hereafter referred to as ALAC), Box 41, Atlanta History Center, (hereafter referred to as AHC).
[309] Roberts Jr., *Infectious Fear*, 97.
[310] Rouse, *Lugenia Burns Hope*, 81.

Throughout much of the first half of the twentieth century, tuberculosis ranked among the top three fatal diseases in urban areas across the country.[311] For African Americans in 1900, TB accounted for 15 percent of total deaths; in 1920 it accounted for 12.8 percent of African American deaths, with the percentage dropping to 8.4 percent by 1940.[312] Though not at rates as high as for African Americans, white Americans experienced high rates of death from TB as well. Regarding tuberculosis, blacks in 1910 Philadelphia had a 57 percent higher mortality rate than native-born whites and a 44 percent higher rate than foreign-born whites, demonstrating that high death rates among the African American community existed across America, not confined solely to the South.[313] According to medical historian Samuel Kelton Roberts, Jr., nonwhite life expectancy rates in 1905 were 31.3 years while white life expectancy was 49.1 years; in 1915, 38.9 and 55.1; in 1925, 45.7 and 60.7; in 1935, 53.1 and 62.9; and in 1945, 57.7 and 66.8, respectively.[314] These low life expectancy rates were due, at least, in part, to the lack of public health services provided to blacks. Historian Sarah Judson correlated the withholding of public health services from blacks as a form of racial violence, arguing a crucial link exists between public health reform and the black community's continuance and survival. Receipt of public health services generally ensured a healthier, longer-living citizenry; therefore, the Neighborhood Union believed in the fight for public health reform as another avenue for improving the lives of black Atlantans.[315]

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[311] Roberts Jr., *Infectious Fear*, 4.
[312] Ibid.
[313] David McBride, *Integrating the City of Medicine: Blacks in Philadelphia Health Care, 1910-1965* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1989), 31.
[314] Ibid., 68.
[315] Sarah Judson, "Civil Rights and Civic Health: African American Women's Public Health Work in Early Twentieth-Century Atlanta," National Women's Studies Association Journal, vol. 11, no. 3, (Autumn 1999): 96; Dittmer, *Black Georgia in the Progressive Era,* 63.

Because of the city of Atlanta's exclusionary practices and continued denial of services to help the African American community address the TB epidemic, blacks, once again, turned inward to help themselves. To accomplish this, blacks sought help from black health professionals and formed their own health networks, using the notions of racial uplift and self-help. Without assistance from the city, the NU owned and operated a Neighborhood Clinic at the Neighborhood House, staffed by volunteer black doctors and nurses. The Neighborhood Clinic provided health care to the West End, a service the city failed to provide. Some cities, in both the North and South, worked with African Americans to prevent and staunch epidemics, but the city of Atlanta never grasped that their direct action could actually improve the health of the entire city.

The city's distribution of municipal services favored white neighborhoods over black neighborhoods; even so, the white poor also knew the pain of inadequate housing and poor public health measures, as they often lacked municipal services and health measures in their own neighborhoods. The ATA and the NU targeted the working-class and poor, believing mothers as the main cause of perpetuating public health problems. Many mothers did not have education in cleanliness, child-bathing, or caring for the sick. The associations especially focused on working mothers as the cause of spreading these problems, stating these women often spent the majority of the day away from home, thus shirking their motherly duties and home-making duties. They believed that overworked domestics, experienced in caring for white homes, often allowed the standards of cleanliness in their own homes to fall to the wayside. The organizations failed to

recognize that many working mothers simply did not possess the time to adhere to the ATA and NU's middle-class standards of health and cleanliness.[316]

The ATA had a hostile relationship with black residents in the early period of the organization's existence, as not having black public health workers made it difficult to reach the masses. Aware of white fears of contagion from blacks, the NU, who sought improvements in public health since its inauguration, turned outward and quickly formed an alliance with the ATA, despite the organization's poor opinion of African Americans. Eventually, as a result of its partnership with the NU, the ATA's attitude toward blacks changed; NU leaders helped the ATA by teaching them how to work with the black community to remedy problems in black neighborhoods.

The ATA and NU's interracial partnership became a community effort, with several members of the Neighborhood Union, and associates and representatives from black Atlanta's colleges, businesses, churches, and other self-help organizations participating. It is through Lugenia Hope, however, that the ATA succeeded in its initial efforts to reach the black community. As early as 1908, the ATA discussed with Hope how to work together to improve public health; she wholeheartedly embraced the suggestion for cooperation and used her connections in the NU to recruit other concerned black citizens to the movement. Hope knew the benefit of aligning with the white-run ATA and how working together would improve access to health care and prevent the spread of TB throughout black Atlanta. Although not directly stated how it requested assistance, Lugenia Hope responded to the appeal by gathering eager black workers via her established network of non-professional social workers.[317] Over the years,

[316] Minutes, Fourth Friday in March, 1910, Neighborhood Union Collection (hereafter referred to as NUC), Box 4, Atlanta University Center (hereafter referred to as AUC); Minutes, Fourth Friday in April 1910, NUC, Box 4, AUC; "Cases Listed on which Comish Had Worked," *Atlanta World*, April 29, 1931.
[317] Outline Anti-TB Work, 1920, NUC, Box 10, AUC.

members from the NU that joined the ATA included Hope, Agnes Jones, Ludie Andrews, Ida Hill, and Tela Irvin. Additionally, from the Neighborhood Union's Board of Directors and through the insistence of many wives, several men affiliated with the NU joined the ATA as well, including Walter Chivers, professor of sociology at Morehouse College and later Atlanta University, and John Hope, president of Morehouse College and later president of Atlanta University. Other prominent citizens also joined the "Negro" branch of the Association, including Jesse O. Thomas from the National Urban League, John Crawford from the Atlanta Urban League, several local ministers, Carrie Taylor of the Pilgrim Life Insurance Company, and Maud Watkins from the YWCA.[318] The majority of these members remained with the "Negro" branch of the association for years, even decades. This widespread support from so many members of black organizations and associations demonstrated that prominent black Atlantans understood the critical need for health care in their city.

The Neighborhood Union and the ATA stressed preventative education, but this was a common strategy used by public health officials. Many southern physicians shared similar views regarding the importance of curbing poor health through preventative education designed to stop the spread of disease. Presenting his findings and opinions on prevention through education as a vehicle for public health, Dr. Lawrence Lee, a white physician from Hoschton, Georgia, in an address to the American Public Health Association in 1914, stated, "By the education of the negro [sic] he may be made a better citizen, and a more useful member of the community, and come to live in better homes and more healthy surroundings. . . . [I]t is necessary that whites . . . in order to protect themselves, furnish the negro [sic] with public charities and better public

[318] Atlanta Anti-Tuberculosis Association, Colored Branch, Attendance for 1927, ALAC Box 21, AHC; Atlanta Tuberculosis Association Colored Branch, Attendance for 1928, ALAC, Box 21, AHC.

charities than exist at present."[319] Another white physician, Dr. L.C. Allen of Savannah, Georgia, furthered the idea of prevention through education, "The remedy of greatest importance is—*education* . . . What is the object of an education? Evidently, it is to fit the child for the duties of life; to train and develop his physical, moral, and mental potentialities so that it will be able, in the 'struggle for existence,' to fight its own battles."[320] Allen believed that an educated citizen also needed to receive practical education not taught in the public school system. Thus, the Neighborhood Union was not alone in its mission to spread preventative education: health officials had concluded that preventative education remained a central strategy for improving blacks' communal health.

Preventative education remained a central goal, but without governmental support, the inequalities in health care for blacks in the South demonstrated yet another means of white domination.[321] Roberts contended that cities needed an increased number of black public health officials to meet demands, since most southern cities practiced the policy of exclusion regarding black health care.[322] As in the rest of the country, a dual health care system emerged, where a medical "sub-world" for blacks took the lead in providing care for its community.[323]

Although the NU taught prevention through education, it could not stop white fears about black disease. During the early twentieth century, a wave of hysteria spread throughout the United States (in Atlanta especially) about the spread of disease into white communities. Other

[319] Lawrence Lee, M.D., "The Negro as a Problem in Public Health Charity," Read before the General Sessions, American Public Health Association, Jacksonville, FL, November 30-December 4, 1914.
[320] L.C. Allen, M.D., "The Negro Health Problem," Read before the General Sessions. American Public Health Association, Jacksonville, FL, November 30-December 4, 1914.
[321] Judson, "Civil Rights and Civic Health," 96
[322] Roberts, *Infectious Fear,* 8.
[323] McBride, *Integrating the City of Medicine,* 7.

areas affected by this panic included Philadelphia, Baltimore, and Savannah.[324] In the rural South, white physicians, although biased and discriminatory, witnessed the government's failure to provide health services to African American communities, and as a result, often crossed the color line to treat black patients, in attempts to curb the spread of disease to whites.[325] Domestics bore the heaviest blame for this fear, because of their daily routine of contact with whites to work in their homes. Part of this fear existed because of whites' failure to recognize that the higher preponderance of TB in black communities resulted from environmental factors, not an innate filthiness. Since it appeared that African Americans showed a higher susceptibility to the disease, white Atlantans feared blacks would spread disease into white sections of the city. Historian Tera Hunter has amply documented this hysteria in Atlanta and attributed three turning points in nineteenth century history as the cause: the abolition of slavery, the validation of the germ theory, and Robert Koch's 1882 discovery of the tubercle bacillus.[326]

During the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, a widespread debate existed in the healthcare community that revolved around African Americans and their roles in the spread of disease. White physicians, health workers, and scientists believed that slavery acted as a form of disease containment. According to many white physicians, slavery essentially had a "quarantine" effect on TB, since few slaves contracted tuberculosis because masters, for financial interests, took care of their slaves. Any slave who fell ill or became injured received medical treatment from a physician, not for altruistic reasons, but to retain the economic value of

[324] McBride, *Integrating the City of Medicine* xvii;; Roberts Jr., *Infectious Fear*, 4;William F. Brunner, M.D., "The Negro Health Problem in Southern Cities," *American Journal of Public Health*, Vol. 5, No. 3, March, 1915: 183-190.
[325] Lynn Marie Pohl, "African American Southerners and White Physicians: Medical Care at the Turn of the Twentieth Century," *Bulletin of the History of Medicine*, vol. 86, no. 2 (Summer 2012): 179.
[326] Hunter, *To 'Joy My Freedom*, 188.

the slave.[327] Allen stated, "Why was the negro free from tuberculosis during slavery time? . . . Then he was disciplined; then he was made to bathe, and to keep clean; he was given plain, but wholesome food; he was furnished a comfortable cabin in which to live; he was made to stay home at night, and rest, that he might be able to work."[328] Alabaman physician Dr. Seale Harris agreed with Allen, claiming that better manners and surroundings in the antebellum South prevented the disease from reaching the slave community.[329]

Tera Hunter argued, however, that the emancipation-unleashing-disease theory had no legitimacy. For much of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, white physicians and historians believed that masters treated their slaves kindly because of considering slaves an economic investment; in reality, however, most slaves suffered from meager diets, inadequate clothing, and unsealed and overcrowded cabins.[330] Although the system of slavery could hardly be described as benevolent, an element of truth to early white physicians' claims about the provision of adequate health care for slaves does exist. This truth can be attributed to masters' economic interest in the health of their slaves motivating their provisions for healthcare, as the slaves' level of well-being determined their market price.[331] This concept, known as "soundness" led many white slave owners to seek the care of white physicians or use slave hospitals to care for their slaves.[332] White slave owners did not provide means for prevention, instead only seeking care when a slave fell sick or injured.

Another piece of this debate revolves around the issue of white public health officials in the postbellum period charging that African Americans refused medical attention because of

[327] Ibid.
[328] Ibid.
[329] Roberts Jr., *Infectious Fear*, 47.
[330] Hunter, *To 'Joy My Freedom,* 189.
[331] Ibid., 20
[332] Ibid.

their newly found freedom.[333] In reality, a strong distrust of white medical officials, rooted in the carryover of experiences from the antebellum era, resulted in few blacks seeking medical attention from whites. Blacks had good reason to distrust white physicians—during the slave era, slaves had no medical consent, and were subjected to medical procedures against their wishes at the behest of the slaveholder.[334] This distrust can also be attributed to white physicians' practice of often experimenting on slaves by performing treatments and operations on them that they would not use on middle or upper-class white Americans.[335] In addition, the region-wide usage in the South of slaves' anatomical parts as exhibits in medical museums without the consent of the family of the departed contributed to this distrust.[336] Thus, in the postbellum period, blacks did not want or accept health assistance from white public health officials in large numbers.

Furthering the hysteria, the acceptance of the germ theory in 1865 and the discovery of the tubercle bacillus germ in 1882 exacerbated the fiction that African Americans in the South spread TB. In 1865, French army surgeon Jean-Antoine Villemin, while experimenting with inoculation, discovered disease contagion.[337] The idea of germ pathogens as the carriers of disease took time to gain acceptance in the United States, as most American doctors of the time believed TB to be an inheritable disease.[338] In 1882, Robert Koch gave scientific legitimacy to germ theory with his discovery of the tubercle bacillus, which gained widespread recognition in

[333] Sharla M. Fett, *Working Cures: Healing, Health and Power on Southern Slave Plantations* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002), ix.
[334] Ibid., 151.
[335] Ibid.
[336] Stephen C. Kenny, "The Development of Medical Museums in the Antebellum American South: Slave Bodies in Networks of Anatomical Exchange," *Bulletin in the History of Medicine*, vol. 87, no 1, (Spring 2013): 34.
[337] "Obituary for Jean-Antoine Villemin," http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2421387/?page=1 [accessed December 14, 2013].
[338] Roberts Jr. *Infectious Fear,* 45.

the United States by 1895.[339] Koch revealed that the cause of the majority of TB cases resulted from catching the germ that traveled through the air and into the lungs.[340] Before the validation of germ theory, people believed TB spread genetically or through an inherent physical weakness. According to the Atlanta Anti-Tuberculosis Association, "In the past people believed that TB was hereditary and incurable."[341] By the early twentieth century, people knew that spit and sputum (oral droplets expectorating from the mouth) spread the disease.[342]

As expectorating became recognized as the chief reason for the spread of TB, and not genetics, people now believed that one could become contaminated through everyday activities or by making contact with the germ in public domains, instead of close contact, as most average citizens did not have a medical background or familiarity with the work of Villemin or Koch. Now that the general population understood it not to be a genetic disease, black domestics became the perfect scapegoat for white Atlanta and other cities across the United States to blame for the spread of TB.[343] Allen charged, "There are colored persons afflicted with gonorrhea, syphilis, and tuberculosis employed as servants in many of the best homes in the South today."[344] Laundresses, domestics who worked with the least oversight from whites, received the harshest of this criticism. The Atlanta Anti-Tuberculosis Association, in line with white hysteria, concluded, "Family washings, to the number of ten and twelve, go into some tuberculosis homes, and usually the ironing is done in room with the patient and clothing are frequently spread upon

[339] *Harvard University Library Open Collections Program*: Contagion: Historical Views of Diseases and Epidemics, Robert Koch, http://ocp.hul.harvard.edu/contagion/koch.html, [accessed December 14, 2013]; Roberts Jr., *Infectious Fear*, 45.
[340] Roberts Jr., *Infectious Fear*, 4; McBride, *Integrating the City of Medicine*, 43.
[341] *First Annual Report of the Atlanta Anti-Tuberculosis and Visiting Nurses Association*, 1909, ALAC, Box 41, AHC.
[342] Hunter, *To 'Joy My Freedom,* 194; Roberts Jr. *Infectious Disease*, 21.
[343] Roberts Jr., *Infectious Fear*, 105; McBride, *Integrating the City of Medicine*, 33.
[344] L.C. Allen, M.D., "The Negro Health Problem," Read before the General Sessions. American Public Health Association, Jacksonville, FL, November 30-December 4, 1914.

the bed occupied by the patient."[345] Evidence of this panic is rampant throughout the pages of the *Atlanta Constitution*. In February 1914, an article titled, "Atlanta Housekeepers Should Make Organized Effort to Improve Conditions Surrounding Homes of Servants," directly blamed the spread of communicable diseases on domestics.[346] As late as 1929, the newspaper, seeping with racist imagery, continued to blame domestics. The 1929 article stated that African Americans must attend to their health, "not only for the benefit he himself may derive but also for the safety of the white race by whose side he lives and for whom he works."[347]

As white fear of contamination from blacks spread throughout the city, few officials or white citizens offered solutions, aside from regulating the movement of domestic servants. Believing in an innately filthy African American citizenry, they did not acknowledge their roles in the actual conditions that contributed to black Atlantans' poor health: a lack of municipal services, no building ordinances, few sewage systems, no garbage removal, and a lack of running water. Though not in the majority, some physicians, however, recommended the provision of municipal services to the black community as a mechanism for improving health. Public Health Officer William F. Brunner, in a report published in the *American Journal of Public Health,* argued, "The municipal government . . . owes an obligation to its people, whites and negroes [sic], by conscientiously looking after the welfare of its inhabitants."[348] Brunner recognized how a lack of municipal services contributed to the spread of disease. In addition, there is evidence that some white Atlantans recognized the African American community's desperate need for city

[345] *First Annual Report of the Atlanta Anti-Tuberculosis and Visiting Nurses Association*, 1909, ALAC, Box 41, AHC.
[346] Atlanta Housekeepers Should Make Organized Effort to Improve Conditions Surrounding Homes of Servants," *Atlanta Constitution*, February 8, 1914.
[347] "Chest Activities among Colored Important Work," *Atlanta Constitution*, March 10, 1929.
[348] William F. Brunner, M.D., "The Negro Health Problem in Southern Cities," *American Journal of Public Health*, vol. 5, no. 3, (March 1915): 186.

services. As early as 1914, the *Atlanta Constitution* maintained, "the congested conditions in schoolhouses; the frightful conditions in those districts where the poorer negroes [sic] live . . . prove that the facilities of the sanitary department are not equal to meeting the demand of these places."[349] Although the sanitary department did not take action, another recommendation, that the white and black communities work together to remedy the situation, occurred through cooperation of the ATA and the NU, such as organizing lectures, house-to-house visits, and promoting the TB dispensary.[350]

Adding to the bad conditions for which whites blamed blacks, the city's two public hospitals provided minimal treatment for blacks. Wealthy blacks could receive treatment from private institutions, but the majority of black Atlantans had no form of health care. Without public health care, the collective health of the black community suffered, contributing to the poor standards that whites blamed as the cause of blacks spreading disease. At the turn of the century, no provisions made by the city or state for the treatment of TB existed. To address public health care, as early as 1908, the NU turned inward, holding discussions on TB, and a Mrs. Turner gave lessons on the care and bathing of the sick to other NU members.[351] In October 1908, a committee formed by the NU met to discuss forming a health clinic.[352] It decided to ask physicians and nurses to work for free, as they should be "glad to cooperate for better health among our people."[353]

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[349] "Atlanta Housekeepers Should Make Organized Effort to Improve Conditions Surrounding Homes of Servants," *Atlanta Constitution*, February 8, 1914.
[350] *Fifth Annual Report of the Atlanta Anti-Tuberculosis Visiting Nurse Association*, 1913, ALAC, Box 41, AHC.
[351] Minutes, August 19, 1908, NUC, Box 4, AUC; Minutes, October 1, 1908, NUC, Box 4, AUC.
[352] Shivery, "The Neighborhood Union," 150.
[353] Minutes, October 1, 1908, NUC, Box 4, AUC.

Black physicians represented the vanguard of black America and held a status immeasurable to other professions.[354] The NU believed that these physicians owed it to the race to help less fortunate citizens and negotiated for their services. Black physicians, although few in number, could further the medical "sub-world" by providing care, motivated by the notions of racial self-help and racial uplift.[355] Although black physicians represented one vital avenue to improving black health, their small numbers, and inability to find work outside of private practice, limited their impact in the fight against TB. With a dispensary, clinic, hospital, or sanatorium to work at, one could convince black residents to come for treatment, as blacks trusted physicians of their own race over white physicians. Thus, the Neighborhood Union's strategy of finding volunteer doctors and nurses to work at the Neighborhood Clinic demonstrates how the NU knew its Neighborhood Clinic would be successful with its use of black public health professionals treating black residents.

Furthering its early public health work, NU clubwomen conducted house-by-house surveys to determine the most pressing public health issues for the black community as early as 1908. The results of the research led to the NU organizing and conducting a large number of free classes and lectures about different health and hygiene concerns for the black community. NU women organized classes regarding care for pregnant women, hygiene, and nursing. They also developed many mothers' meetings that intended to improve parenting skills in order to maintain a healthy family. These classes and meetings became a major part of the organization's program. In addition, before allying with the ATA, black Atlanta already had two anti-TB leagues in existence but lacked public funding, restricting their influence. Public health care for African

[354] McBride, *Integrating the City of Medicine*, 10.
[355] Ibid., 70.

Americans in Atlanta remained almost non-existent until the Neighborhood Union turned inward and addressed the lack of available services. Since the city failed to make health care provisions, the Neighborhood Union established services and programs designed to improve black access to health care and preventative education.

In 1909, only one sanatorium existed in Atlanta for African Americans—the Home for Incurables, run by an unspecified Christian association. Sanatoriums provided care for the sick and helped to prevent contagion, by keeping the ill out of the public population. A sick individual needed to stay at a sanatorium for an extended time period so he or she could have his or disease become arrested or go into remission. The ATA declared, "Unless they stay a sufficient time they cannot hope for the result, for there must be built up a reserve force upon which they may draw in time of stress and strain."[356] Adhering to the advice in a sanatorium remained critical to keeping cases arrested. If TB patients could eat properly, get fresh air, remain idle, and obtain a proper night's rest, he or she would probably not need the services of a sanatorium. The ATA concluded that once released from the sanatorium, many people immediately went back to work, attempting to re-instate their statuses as breadwinner. The pressure of returning to work so soon after recovery often resulted in relapses, making the individual more ill than before, resulting shortly after in death.[357] Some people could be cured with or without the need of a sanatorium, but poor blacks did not have that luxury, since they could not afford to take the time off work needed to stay at a sanatorium nor home and rest while recovering. In 1910, however, the lack of a sanatorium that served blacks was acknowledged by both the city of Atlanta and the county, who each made a $10,000 appropriation for the

[356] *First Annual Report of the Atlanta Anti-Tuberculosis and Visiting Nurses Association*, 1909, ALAC, Box 41, AHC
[357] Ibid.

construction of a tuberculosis sanatorium that included a segregated ward for African Americans, Battle Hill Sanatorium.[358]

As mentioned, the ATA initially had a hostile relationship with the black community. Unable to effectively reach them, it scornfully looked upon the black community as spreaders of disease. The association asserted, "Tuberculosis Thrives among Negro population to an appalling degree."[359] In the ATA Annual Report from 1909, the association declared that African Americans spread the disease to each other through ignorance and inadequate housing.[360] Physicians generally believed that well ventilated rooms and fresh air helped cure TB, and attributed black housing conditions as a cause of spreading the disease. In small houses, blacks often huddled together to sleep, which often prevented fresh air from flowing through the room, which physicians claimed helped to spread disease. Some physicians claimed that African Americans hated the cold, and refused to open their windows in the winter, preventing any fresh air from flowing into the home.[361] The ATA reported a story of, "a homeless dying consumptive [who] was found sleeping under the bed of a generous friend in a lodging house . . . all the air was excluded from the room by tightly closing one window."[362] Both white physicians and the ATA failed to recognize that most African Americans did not choose their housing conditions and did not voluntarily choose to help spread disease. They lived in small, dilapidated homes because they could neither afford larger homes with plumbing, sewage, or other conveniences, nor did most houses in their neighborhoods have these features. Residential segregation forced

[358] *Second Annual Report of the Atlanta Anti- Tuberculosis and Visiting Nurses Association*, 1910, ALAC, Box 41, AHC.
[359] L.C. Allen, M.D., "The Negro Health Problem," Read before the General Sessions. American Public Health Association, Jacksonville, FL, November 30-December 4, 1914.
[360] Ibid.
[361] Lawrence Lee, M.D., "The Negro as a Problem in Public Health Charity," Read before the General Sessions, American Public Health Association, Jacksonville, FL, November 30-December 4, 1914.
[362] *Second Annual Report of the Atlanta Anti- Tuberculosis and Visiting Nurses Association*, 1910, ALAC, Box 41, AHC.

African Americans to live in certain neighborhoods, and the neglect from the city and the unwillingness of builders and landlords to provide adequate housing came through no fault of the residents. Landlords showed little interest in improving their properties, as it increased property taxes.[363] Allen shared the opinion that, "In the majority of negro [sic] families the sick are never bathed, and their clothing and bed clothing not changed for weeks at a time. The room is not aired, nor kept clean."[364] Without running water, regular bathing proved difficult, and many blacks did not know the benefit of fresh air for tuberculosis sufferers, preferring to keep their windows closed, especially in the winter.[365]

Lee also encouraged interracial cooperation and recognized that in order to help the white community, the black community must be helped as well. "Selfishness, therefore, even if there were not other motives, demands that the negro [sic] be provided with better charities, better schools, especially industrial schools, better hospitals, and the out-patient department and visiting nurses should go with them."[366] Lee concluded his lecture, arguing, "This must rest on the moral obligation of a higher race to an inferior race dependent upon it; and further on the practical and selfish ground that it is impossible to protect the white people and neglect the black."[367] Lee asserted that addressing public health issues in the black community would lead to improved health among whites, as disease knew no segregation ordinances. Lee recognized how environmental factors affected TB rates in black communities and how improvements provided by the city would curb the spread of disease. Other white physicians, with the intention of

[363] Roberts Jr. *Infectious Fear*, 76.
[364] L.C. Allen, M.D., "The Negro Health Problem," Read before the General Sessions. American Public Health Association, Jacksonville, FL, November 30-December 4, 1914.
[365] The Child Welfare Department of Atlanta emphasized proper bathing for children as daily in the summer, and twice weekly in the winter. "Child Welfare Department (Instructional Info), January 29, 1924, NUC, Box 6, AUC. Check fn
[366] Lawrence Lee, M.D., "The Negro as a Problem in Public Health Charity," Read before the General Sessions, American Public Health Association, Jacksonville, FL, November 30-December 4, 1914.
[367] Ibid.

assisting the white population guard against disease and crime, argued that whites needed to take responsibility for the African American community, or take injurious risks. According to Public Health Officer Brunner, "The negro [sic] is with you for all time. He is what you will make him, and it is up to the white people to prevent him from becoming a criminal and to guard him against tuberculosis, syphilis, etc. If he is tainted with disease, you will suffer; if he develops criminal tendencies, you will be affected."[368] Thus, Brunner shared similar opinions with Lee, that improving sanitation and health among African Americans would create a healthier white citizenry.

Agreeing with the other physicians, Brunner recognized the need for providing city services to blacks, and said as much in his report. Although this report discussed conditions in Savannah, its findings could be applied to any American city where African Americans lived in city-induced squalor. He stated, "These people have no fair fight for health. While they are ignorant, their environment is such that they will always be ignorant. These people are with us to stay, and they should be protected against themselves. In doing this we protect ourselves." Much like Lee, he believed that the time had come for the "dominant white race" to address these problems and legislate for action and services for African Americans, as improvements for the black community would affect the entire population.[369]

As a white-run organization, the ATA took steps to address the prevention, spread, and treatment of TB in Atlanta. The first ATA dispensary, a location established to provide medical examinations for the care and treatment of TB, opened on April 1, 1907; the association opened a

[368] William F. Brunner, M.D., "The Negro Health Problem in Southern Cities," 186.
[369] Ibid.

dispensary for African Americans in August 1909.[370] Dispensaries became significant areas for TB care because they served two purposes: they monitored the ill while compiling data about the disease.[371] Unlike in rural areas, where a single physician typically rendered treatment to a large population of patients, these dispensaries provided services from many doctors to patients in need. It had poor attendance from African Americans, however, as only eighty black patients received care by December 31, 1909. Statistical reports from the following year reveals key data about the treatment of blacks at the African American ATA dispensary. Of the 433 people who received Tuberculin treatments, only sixty came from the black community (13.8 percent). Regarding diagnoses, African Americans represented twenty-three of the sixty-eight positive cases. The low percentage of TB cases reviewed in the black population is statistically interesting because it suggests less concern in receiving care existed amongst a group with a high preponderance for TB. While the ATA sought to improve African American access to their dispensary, in its early years of cooperation, the ATA had yet to create an organized, effective program for outreach, nor had it established liaisons to the black community, besides the relationship it had with Lugenia Hope. Because of their widespread distrust of white health officials, few African Americans sought care unless guided by black leaders. The ATA spoke scornfully, "Our experience with the Negro race thus far has been very unsatisfactory. Very few patients carry out instructions, and they persist in resorting to all kinds of 'quack remedies' and 'hoo-doo' schemes of cure."[372] Hoo-doo, a form of black spiritual care rooted in the slave era,

[370] *Second Annual Report of the Atlanta Anti- Tuberculosis and Visiting Nurses Association*, 1910, ALAC, Box 41, AHC. *Outline of Anti-Tuberculosis Work*, 1920, NUC, Box 10, AUC, states that the first dispensary for African Americans opened on February 18, 1909.
[371] Roberts Jr., *Infectious Fear*, 16.
[372] Ibid.

involved the belief that someone had bewitched or cursed an individual.[373] To overcome it, a healer conjured the spirit and defeated it.

Stemming the spread of TB remained the ATA and NU's focus and primary strategy in their fight against the disease, which they hoped to accomplish through the use of the NU's oft used method of providing preventative education. The ATA emphasized prevention as the main goal of their organization, contending, "In the work undertaken by this Association the objective point is not so much the care of a given tubercular patient as it is the relief and prevention of tuberculosis. It is not so much the question of proper rooms for a family as it is the improvement of living and working conditions."[374] The ATA, along with the NU, placed a higher emphasis on education rather than direct treatment of infected patients, because it believed that education would yield the best outcome in the struggle to curb the TB epidemic. As a result, these organizations focused on achieving improvements in facilities and home life. As early as 1910, the ATA attempted to accomplish these goals by focusing on African American districts where they gave four instructive lectures in each section, with the goal of dispensing education on the prevention, causes, and cure of tuberculosis to the African American community.[375] Each Sunday, it gave two lectures in rotation to different audiences until it covered all districts.[376] Breaking new ground, one white and one black doctor conducted these lectures, which demonstrates how white and black leaders cooperated during the burgeoning movement.

By 1913, the ATA continued its efforts to help the black community with its formation of a "Negro Race Committee," with Alice Ware, wife of the president of Atlanta University, as

[373] Fett, *Working Cures*, 85.
[374] "Atlanta Anti-Tuberculosis Association," 1914, ALAC, Box 41, AHC.
[375] Ibid.
[376] *Second Annual Report of the Atlanta Anti-Tuberculosis and Visiting Nurses Association*, 1910, ALAC, Box 41, AHC.

chair; the ATA organized this committee to work in conjunction with black leaders to improve the health of the black community.[377] Creating a committee to specifically address health problems in the black community demonstrates how seriously the ATA took its work in the black community, recognizing it as the key to improving health city-wide. The "Negro Race Committee" and ATA members gave lectures at universities and public schools, and arranged for a white nurse to visit the homes of black TB patients. This nurse, however, experienced difficulties accessing these homes since many African Americans suspiciously regarded the nurse as trying to intrude upon their lives, a sentiment rooted in the prejudices of the antebellum period.[378] Early efforts at TB care for the black community at the national level involved intrusion and surveillance by whites through regular home inspections.[379] The majority of early work also included establishing dispensaries, educational campaigns (designed at prevention), and the visiting (white) nurse.[380] White public health officials looked scornfully on the black community. Many white doctors and nurses believed, "Negro children, as a rule, are neglected, not receiving proper training at home. Their ailments are given too little attention. Food is often lacking. Parents are incapable of giving their children proper care and training. The schools teach only book-learning. Many are allowed to grow up in idleness, and often acquire habits of indolence and vice."[381] The unwillingness of black mothers (typically those home during the afternoon when white nurses made visits) to receive the services of the visiting white nurse, resulted from their rampant racial biases against whites in the medical profession. White health

[377] *Fifth Annual Report of the Atlanta Anti-Tuberculosis Visiting Nurses Association*, 1913, ALAC, Box 41, AHC.
[378] Ibid.
[379] Roberts Jr., *Infectious Fear*, 14-15.
[380] Ibid.
[381] L.C. Allen, M.D., "The Negro Health Problem," Read before the General Sessions. American Public Health Association, Jacksonville, FL, November 30-December 4, 1914.

professionals viewed all African Americans by the worst examples of the race, not understanding that mistrust and suspicion resulted in their inability to access black residents. [382]

The strategy of sending white nurses to black homes resulted from the successful use of this strategy in the homes of whites infected with TB. Though unsuccessful in the black community, this strategy proved effective with whites because of how their views of these white nurses differed from those of the black community. White nurses understood the value of their work and believed their efforts toward preventive care crucial in the fight against TB. White acceptance of these home visits is demonstrated through Elsa Phillips Crandall's (likely a white nurse) statements that "Almost immediately scientists, physicians, and nurses, city and state departments of health began to turn their attention to prevention rather than to cure . . . with measurements of community rather than individual health."[383] This demonstrates the value of preventative education among the public health community. She continued, "It was the repeated visits of the nurse that kept up the mother's enthusiasm sufficiently to overcome her weariness of the indifference and incredulity of her neighbors . . . made it possible to impart the larger lessons of regular feedings and regular sleep, of fresh air and sunshine, of daily baths and correct clothing."[384] Crandall directly linked white visiting nurses to a mother's ability to provide for the proper hygiene of her home and family. These visits demonstrated the differences between the white and black community in what they considered the responsibilities of the mother. White visiting nurses viewed black women as largely responsible for the care of their children. According to black elites, black women bore not only the responsibility for child-rearing but for

[382] Stephanie Shaw, *What a Woman Ought to Be and to Do: Black Professional Women Workers During the Jim Crow Era* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996), 167.
[383] Ella Phillips Crandall, "The Relation of Public Health Nursing to the Public Health Campaign," Read by title before the American Public Health Association, December 1, 1914, Jacksonville, FL.
[384] Ibid.

all children of the race. In accordance with racial uplift ideology, that responsibility extended to all black children, future citizens who need proper care and guidance to become respectable and responsible adults.[385]

The ATA needed a new strategy: tasking African American leaders with the responsibilities of data collection, educating their neighbors, and working to prevent and treat tuberculosis. The inclusion of visiting black public health officials demonstrates the ATA's understanding that improvements in the community would be best achieved by blacks helping blacks. The ATA came to view work in the black community as the most important aspect of its program. By 1913, the ATA's attitude began to change slightly into one more favorable toward the black community. According to an annual report, "the black community needed much work and lessons in improving living and working conditions, and their overall health."[386] After five years of cooperating with the black middle-class to achieve its goals, the ATA had received lessons, explanations, and guidance from black leaders. The organization now understood that unsanitary living conditions in black neighborhoods spread disease, because of the presence of garbage, sewage, and outhouse contamination. The ATA did not place the entirety of blame on African Americans for these conditions, recognizing black communities to be "victim[s] of circumstances" and they could not be "expect[ed] to confine Tuberculosis to his locality of the city . . . as well as other infectious diseases."[387] The association contended that environmental issues spread disease, yet still concerned itself with the spread of disease into white neighborhoods. This understanding helped the ATA to identify the need for helping blacks who were unable to help themselves because of their circumstances, and that it would benefit the

[385] Evelyn Brooks Higginbotham, *Righteous Discontent: The Women's Movement in the Black Baptist Church, 1880-1920* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1993), 202.
[386] *Fifth Annual Report of the Atlanta Anti-Tuberculosis Visiting Nurse Association*, 1913, ALAC, Box 41, AHC.
[387] Ibid.

entire city by stemming the spread of disease from black to white neighborhoods. The ATA's new understanding represented the vanguard of changing public southern opinions on the spread of disease in black communities, as white officials in other southern localities, such as Baltimore, did not begin to change their views toward African Americans and their role in the spread of tuberculosis until the 1920s.[388]

That same year, statistics show that the percentage of blacks seeking care in Atlanta did not reflect the actual percentage of blacks sick with TB. Data reveals doctors observed 1,136 patients, with 327 of that total being black. Amongst these 1,136 patients, blacks made up twenty-two of the sixty-four diagnosed with Incipient (early) Tuberculosis, thirty-six of the 122 diagnosed as Moderately Advanced (medium), forty of ninety-nine as Far Advanced, and 133 of 465 diagnosed as free from the disease. Including patients returning from the previous year, African Americans cases represented 448 of the 1,636 total cases seen at the clinic (27.3 percent).[389] The numbers show an improvement from the early years, before the ATA/NU alliance could effectively take shape. Yet, the Atlantan population consisted of approximately 33 percent African American, and they disproportionately suffered from the disease, catching TB at much higher rates than whites. Therefore, the 27.3 percentage shows that a significant number of African Americans sick with TB did not seek clinical help and that the ATA's tuberculosis clinic needed to increase their numbers in respect to African American residents using their facilities. As a result of these findings, the ATA knew it had to find a more effective way to influence the black community to seek medical attention.

In an attempt to secure a better strategy for reaching the black community, on June 12, 1914, the NU and the ATA held a meeting to discuss cooperating in an anti-tuberculosis

[388] Roberts Jr., *Infectious Fear*, 11.
[389] *Fifth Annual Report of the Atlanta Anti-Tuberculosis Visiting Nurse Association*, 1913, ALAC, Box 41, AHC.

campaign. Much like the NU's previous work, the organizations suggested using house-to-house surveys conducted by middle-class African Americans to investigate the extent of the unsanitary conditions in their communities. The ATA believed they would achieve more success using black leaders as canvassers. Although home visits represented a form of surveillance, the NU had used this method for obtaining information and drawing reports since its creation, and had personal relationships with many neighbors. These surveys would determine if unsanitary conditions in the home resulted from the fault of the tenant or landlord, and, when applicable, the organization intended to report the property-owner to the local authorities. The committee also recommended the hiring of a black health officer, which the ATA hoped would create some trust among black citizens, and agreed to meet monthly to further their public health agenda in the black community.[390]

Using networks established by the NU, Hope and Rosa Lowe, a white anti-TB worker with the ATA, embarked on a public health campaign for the black community in 1914. Both women believed that an unhealthy, diseased person could not effectively take part in social, civic, or public life and that people required good physical health to become upright citizens.[391] Hope and Lowe felt strongly about the urgency of health care, and working together, the women cut across racial boundaries in order to better the needs of the entire community.[392] Both Lowe and Hope, like many other Progressives, believed that a healthy, livable environment provided the link to establishing a well-informed, responsible, and respectable citizenry. Although most white Atlantans believed that poor black health resulted from inherent inferiority and a disinterest in hygiene, Lowe and Hope believed that inadequate public policies and the city's

[390] "Anti-Tuberculosis Campaign Among Negroes is Discussed," *Atlanta Constitution*, June 21, 1914.
[391] Linda Kerber, "The Republican Mother: Women and the Enlightenment- An American Perspective," *American Quarterly*, vol. 28, no. 2 (Summer 1976): 202.
[392] Sarah Judson, "Civil Rights and Civic Health,"99.

neglect of African American communities contributed to the spread of disease. Both shared the nationwide progressive zeal of black health leaders and Progressives taking the lead in the prevention and treatment of disease in black communities.[393] Lowe agreed with the white majority's belief that black domestics spread diseases. Unlike other whites with this opinion, however, she offered a solution: improving the collective health of the black constituency would improve health citywide. The NU used her idea to its advantage during its public health measures by garnering support from the main branch of the ATA and the city.[394]

Since the disenfranchisement campaign, blacks had a limited role in the public sphere and policy-making. Turning outward and working in conjunction with a reputable (white-run) organization gave the NU more power in its work to improve the health of the black community. By forming the "Negro Race Committee," the organization raised needed funds, gained publicity for its programs, and brushed shoulders with politicians and civic leaders, all while working for the collective health of Atlanta. Submitting to the restrictions of white power structures enabled Hope and the NU to achieve a small measure of political license by gaining allies from prominent whites.[395]

The NU focused on making white allies in its work to improve public heath, but preventative education remained the most important strategy of the program. In 1914, as a result of Lowe and Hope's work, African Americans in the ATA organized more completely than the previous years for educational work, done by volunteers in their own communities. It implemented a massive survey regarding housing conditions to locate the causes of the disease. The ATA knew, generally speaking, that poor living and working conditions resulted in the

[393] McBride, *Integrating the City of Medicine*, 8.
[394] Judson, "Civil Rights and Civic Health," 99.
[395] "Anti-Tuberculosis Campaign Among Negroes is Discussed," *Atlanta Constitution*, June 21, 1914.

spread of disease, but data collected during the organization's survey work enabled the ATA to pinpoint specific causes. According to the association, "With this information it will be easily shown where wherein the housing code Atlanta falls short of the model form and efforts will be directed toward securing new housing laws."[396] Though the sociological departments of the black universities in the West End and the Neighborhood Union conducted the surveys, the ATA used the information to craft its strategies for preventative education.

After finally understanding that African Americans could not be held responsible for the poor conditions they faced that contributed to the spread of tuberculosis, continuing and expanding its cooperation with the black community became one of the primary focuses of the ATA. Regarding work for the African American community, the ATA claimed, "We consider that of all the work done the most important is that done in behalf of the negro [sic] race. This is difficult because self-help through racial activity is absolutely necessary for any permanent results, and in order to obtain this activity, there must be inspiration and enthusiasm."[397] It recognized that race leaders held these qualities, but the leaders knew many race members did not understand self-help and racial uplift ideology. Finally, the ATA promised to cooperate with any and all race leaders via any means possible to work together to attack public health problems in the black community.

After active involvement in TB work, in 1915, the "negro [sic] branch" of the Atlanta Anti-Tuberculosis Association officially formed with Dr. John Hope as chairman, Rosa Lowe as secretary, and H.H. Pace as president. The formation of a separate branch, grown from the "Negro Race Committee" demonstrates the ATA's commitment to improving black Atlantans' health care and how the involvement of African American leaders had shifted the ATA's

[396] *Atlanta Anti-Tuberculosis Association*, 1914, ALAC, Box 41, AHC.
[397] Ibid.

platform into focusing on the black community first. If TB rates improved in the black community, it would curb the spread of transmission into white sections of the city. The following year, the ATA hired their first black nurse to join the nursing staff at the ATA clinic.[398] African American residents held a great regard for black professionals and trusted black health officials to provide honest care for the black community. The inclusion of a paid black nurse at the clinic represented a milestone in interracial cooperation and would hopefully increase black participation in ATA programs. Historically, white health officials had abused, neglected, or experimented on African Americans, and the inclusion of a black health nurse demonstrated the ATA's commitment to convincing African Americans to accept treatment and improve the lives of black community members.

The ATA originally worked in black communities with the purpose of conducting research to warn whites about the dangers of interacting with African Americans, especially women. The NU conducted similar surveys, but with different intentions. Much like their investigation into the public school system, NU women documented, researched, and photographed living conditions in black communities and lobbied the city government for improvements. The NU demanded "improvement of unpaved, neglected, swampy, and dark streets; the removal of garbage dumped in black neighborhoods; the repair of open sewers; the elimination of foul privies; the revamping and expansion of poorly ventilated and overcrowded schools."[399] In the presentation of its findings, the Neighborhood Union played to white stereotypes, relying on whites' worst views of blacks, including their views of blacks as lazy, inherently diseased, and filthy disease-spreaders, to motivate whites to respond to its promotion

[398] Outline Anti-Tuberculosis Work, NUC, Box 10, AUC; *Annual Report of Atlanta Anti-Tuberculosis Association: For the Year 1915*, ALAC, Box 41, AHC.
[399] Hunter, *To 'Joy My Freedom,* 214.

of social and civic change for improved conditions.[400] The city took no action, but in later years, the NU/ATA public health programs would reach a wider audience, resulting in increased interracial cooperation and the provision of some (although miniscule) municipal services for black communities, discussed in chapter four.

In addition to turning outward through requesting municipal services, the NU and ATA sought a building ordinance to maintain hygienic environments. In June 1915, the ATA sponsored a survey-based "Report of Public Buildings" in black neighborhoods. Sociology departments from black universities and the Neighborhood Union collaborated to conduct this survey, under the auspices of the ATA. Many important leaders in the black community contributed to this survey, including the chairman of the committee conducting the survey, Matthew W. Bullock, a professor at Morehouse College and NU husband, who signed the report.[401] Some of the buildings inspected included, "lodge rooms, halls, grocery stores, soda founts and other places where Negroes congregate in large numbers."[402] Though surveyors inspected many buildings, they fell short of their goals, and did not finish inspecting several of the buildings on which it hoped to report; though they did not reach their initial goal, the surveyors completed enough inspections of halls and rooms to write an official report. The report detailed the good condition of the I.B.C. Hall and the Odd Fellows buildings' lodge rooms, including that the rooms possessed adequate ventilation. Additionally, both had modern plumbing and sanitation and were relatively new buildings. The report indicated that lodge members did not spit on the floors, which could spread TB, and "the committee places these lodge rooms in a class by themselves."[403]

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[400] Judson, "Civil Rights and Civic Health," 94.
[401] Ibid.; *Annual Report of Atlanta Anti-Tuberculosis Association: For the Year 1915*, 1915, ALAC, Box 41, AHC.
[402] "Report of Committee on Public Buildings," July 13, 1915, ALAC, Box 47, AHC.
[403] Ibid.

The report also highlighted three additional lodges, that although older, were in good condition. These lodges had good ventilation, but because of their age, the plumbing and sanitation needed work. The buildings, although clean, lacked modern facilities, and needed work on the toilets. The report concluded that because of the conditions of the inspected buildings, the likelihood of spreading disease remained slight. By reviewing popular gathering places, where close contact could spread disease, the ATA sought to improve sanitary conditions in the public sphere, along with the private.

Another survey regarding public facilities was conducted in 1915. Black juvenile probation officer, Garrie Moore, under the direction of the ATA, made an investigation of the movie theaters in black neighborhoods.[404] At this time, there existed three movie theaters that served African Americans in Atlanta—81 at 81 Decatur Street, 91 at 91 Decatur Street, and one in the Odd Fellows Building on Auburn Avenue.[405] Moore reported that Theater 81 had a seating capacity of 1,500, with 1,000 seats on the main floor and 500 in the gallery. The main floor had adequate ventilation, but inadequate air quality in the gallery. Moore attributed this inadequacy to the difficulty of fresh air being able to travel up the winding staircases leading to the gallery and to a poorer degree of cleanliness on the balcony, both of which contribute to the spread of disease. Well treated and clean, the building had electricity on the main floor and no overcrowding as the theater did not allow standing. Thus, although the balcony needed more ventilation, 81 received a positive review from Moore.

Moore reported that Theater 91, similarly constructed to Theater 81 but with a smaller seating capacity of 700, did not have as frequent attendance as 81, but reported that the

[404] Ibid. Shivery notes the moving picture survey as taking place in 1914. Shivery, "The Neighborhood Union," 153.
[405] "Investigation of Negro Moving Picture Shows in Atlanta," ALAC, Box 47. AHC.

"physical conditions of the building are about the same. All that has been said about '81' will apply with equal force to '91.' The latter bears the reputation of having a lower class vaudeville."[406] Finally, Moore's report discussed the Odd Fellows Building's picture show, which had a seating volume of 1,500 with frequent attendance by the upper and middle classes because of its location in the center of the black business district. Moore stated that this is the best theater house in the city, with good management and adequate facilities.[407] The ATA valued Moore's report, which detailed theater inspections, locations where close contact could spread disease, demonstrating, much like the survey on lodges, that the organization did not only concern themselves with the health of the home, but with potential to spread diseases in public locations.[408]

Also during 1915, the ATA released its Annual Report, where the ATA credited Hope and the Neighborhood Union for the work they had accomplished in the black community. The report championed Hope and the NU, for their volunteers who "visit, instruct, and aid" families with sick members.[409] Members cleaned homes, provided comfort to the ill, and gave instruction to prevent the spread or return of disease. The Neighborhood Union members sought to educate those in need to prevent such instances from reoccurring and to improve the overall health of the individual or family through these personal visits. According to the ATA, "The Association is much gratified with the spirit shown and the work being done by the Negro branch of the Anti-Tuberculosis Association."[410] This attitude demonstrates how the ATA, once looking with

[406] Ibid.
[407] Ibid.
[408] Ibid.
[409] Ibid.
[410] *Atlanta Anti-Tuberculosis Association*, 1914, ALAC, Box 41, AHC.

contempt upon the black community, acknowledged the dedication of black elites, and recognized their determined work among the African American community.

After their successful work throughout 1915, African American members of the ATA received an invitation to join the white branch for a joint meeting on September 9, 1915. According to a letter of invitation sent to the Hopes, the planned discussion would entail matters of equal concern to both races.[411] At this meeting, the black branch of the ATA stated that solid work comes from the realization that disease crosses the color line. According to the main branch of the ATA, "The things that are necessary in the study and prevention of tuberculosis among white people are doubly so among the colored people. Housing conditions among negroes [sic] must be improved before any adequate relief can be obtained."[412] As a result of this assessment, the ATA continued to seek the passing of a city-enforced building ordinance requiring that landlords comply with the law and fix homes that bred disease.[413]

The black branch of the ATA switched its trajectory in 1916 from focusing on the home to instead centering its work on public schools and children, also carriers and spreaders of tuberculosis. The ATA believed children to be a valuable resource in their public health fight, considering children to be impressionable, and thus capable of taking the education received in school about the causes and spread of TB and incorporating it into the rest of their lives, while also spreading what they learned into their home lives by teaching their parents about the deleterious effects of the disease. From April 6–12 of 1915, ATA members spent one hour a day with teachers in the public schools, where members and doctors gave lectures on various topics, such as "Personal Hygiene, Home Hygiene, and Tuberculosis; its Causes Prevention and

[411] "Rosa Lowe to Professor and Mrs. Hope," September 4, 1915, ALAC, Box 19, AHC.
[412] *Annual Report of Atlanta Anti-Tuberculosis Association: For the Year 1915*, 1915, ALAC, Box 41, AHC.
[413] Ibid.

Cure."[414] These lectures aroused great interest amongst the teachers, resulting in 50 percent black teacher participation rates in the ATA's 1916 Seal Sale, the association's main fundraiser for the year. This fundraiser sold seals (stamp equivalents), which people could use to send letters. The ATA's new focus on children mirrored the Neighborhood Union's long established goal of reaching children.

Focusing on children, the NU encouraged adults to bring their children into the Neighborhood Clinic. In 1916, the clinic saw over 200 children, and "in many cases, incipient diseases of a dangerous nature were found and sufficient medical attention and advice was given to prevent the spread of the disease."[415] The Neighborhood Clinic could distribute little medicine, however, because of a lack of funding. For serious cases, the clinic staff referred patients to other facilities, for those suffering from common illnesses, the clinic offered advice to combat the illness, and made follow-up visits to check on patients and make sure they adhered to medical advice. Because of this lack of funding, doctors and nurses volunteered their time at the clinic in order to help the residents of the community. The volunteering of these black medical professionals proved essential to the success of the clinic, which otherwise would not have been able to effectively serve the community because of blacks' distrust of white public health officials. The NU experienced great success in its recruitment efforts of local black doctors, many of whom happily donated their time at the Neighborhood Clinic to promote the wellness of the race. Some black doctors also had familial relations with NU members and volunteered because of family obligations. The staffing of African American doctors and nurses at the Neighborhood Clinic increased its popularity, as blacks strongly trusted black public health officials over white.

[414] Ibid.
[415] Ibid.

Additional works toward improving the public health of the black community include NU-implemented neighborhood wide clean-up campaigns, the specific goals of which included preventing diseases from spreading and forming. During these campaigns, participants cleared vacant lots, picked up trash, planted gardens, cleaned their homes, and completed other activities designed to help their neighborhoods. The Atlanta clean-up campaigns used the motto: "Burn, Bury, Beautify." [416] The motto described the practice of burning trash, burying different materials, and beautifying their sections of the city to bring about community improvements. The association targeted children by offering prizes for various accomplishments, including having the cleanest yards at their homes, working the hardest, or collecting the most garbage. As part of these campaigns, the NU received permission to enter public schools and educate children about the importance of a clean neighborhood. Making it a contest provided great incentive for children to participate and they worked harder than any other group to beautify their neighborhoods. The clean-up campaigns served to better the community since 1909 (although less organized and successful), and although preventing the spread of tuberculosis remained a focal point, the NU never stopped pushing for environmental improvements in the neighborhoods, which also contributed to the spread of other diseases. These cleanup campaigns became a focal point of the Neighborhood Union's message for over twenty years. The city eventually executed city-wide clean up campaigns and took credit for its creation, although the black community had worked on these campaigns for years.[417] In the 1920s, the ATA and NU would shift its focus almost exclusively toward children, discussed in chapter four.

[416] Report of National Negro Health Week, April 3-9, 1921, NUC, Box 10, AUC.
[417] Atlanta Anti-Tuberculosis Association: Report of Educational Department from June 12 to July 17, 1919, NUC, Box 6, AHC.

In line with the tradition of the clean-up campaign, in the spring of 1917, the ATA and NU participated in the aggressive public health campaign of National Negro Health Week. National Negro Health Week, initiated by Booker T. Washington in 1915, focused on providing free health clinics and health education courses to the black community.[418] The first Negro Health Week occurred in Virginia in 1913, but Booker T. Washington, founder of the Tuskegee Institute in 1881 and the most prominent African American leader in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, made it a national movement shortly before his death in 1915.[419] According to Washington, "We are asking the colored people of the nation to unite in observing a National Health Week, in the belief that in carrying out this suggestion they will be doing the best possible service to themselves and to their race."[420] Because of the national high mortality rate among African Americans, Washington inaugurated this annual weeklong campaign to educate and improve the health of black individuals and communities.[421] After his death, the National Negro Business League (an association spearheaded by Washington) took over operations for National Negro Health Week. Observed annually, locations and agencies and organizations across the country, including the federal government, cooperated to make it a successful movement.

The NU participated in National Negro Health Week since its inception, but in 1917, Atlanta achieved great success in National Negro Health Week campaigns and won the Silver Cup against all participating cities in the United States. Achieving national recognition for the

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[418] Outline Anti-Tuberculosis Work, NUC, Box 10, AUC; Adam Fairclough, *Better Day Coming: Blacks and Equality, 1890*-2000 (New York: Penguin Books, 2001), 61; *Annual Report of Atlanta Anti-Tuberculosis Association: For the Year 1915*, 1915, ALAC, Box 41, AHC.
[419] Roscoe C. Brown, "The National Negro Health Week Movement," *The Journal of Negro Education*, vol. 6, no. 3, (July 1937): 553.
[420] Booker T. Washington, in Monroe N. Work, "Tuskegee Institute More Than an Educational Institution," *Journal of Educational Sociology*, vol. 7, no. 3, Negro Education, (November 1933): 202.
[421] Roscoe C. Brown, "The National Negro Health Week Movement," 553.

NU's health work demonstrates the powerful impact clean-up campaigns and other NU/ATA sponsored public health measures had on black Atlantans[422] Obtaining national recognition for their work created pride among the black community, and fueled additional public health campaigns. In addition, white society and policymakers took notice. Like Hope, Washington believed that segregation and racism contributed to illness and disease, not inherent filthiness. The ATA sponsored Atlanta's 1917 National Negro Health Week, but the NU, however, actually controlled the campaign. Part of National Negro Health Week included conducting the clean-up campaign in black neighborhoods. The ATA also sponsored a "Medico-Educational Campaign" which focused on educating the black community about the benefits of healthy living. Carrie Dukes, a Spelman Seminary graduate and NU member, who secured a paid position as a health educator in the ATA at the request of Hope, became the leader of the campaign.[423]

The Medico-Educational Campaign consisted of female volunteers conducting house-to-house visits to educate the public about health and inform their neighbors about free portable clinics coming to their area. The Neighborhood Clinic was located on the West Side, limiting the number of people it could assist, as many people did not have the luxury of owning vehicles. The NU once again turned inward, providing portable health clinics to run throughout the city, which expanded NU-provided health care to the entire black community of Atlanta. Over 200 volunteers worked this campaign, and insurance agents distributed 50,000 health circulars and 5,000 canvassers' blanks for survey work. The Neighborhood Union supplied field workers and the use of their Neighborhood House as headquarters for the campaign.[424] During these visits, NU women conducted surveys and interviews to learn what services blacks most needed. The

[422] Outline Anti-Tuberculosis Work, NUC, Box 10, AUC
[423] "Anti-Tuberculosis Association will Aid Colored People," *Atlanta Constitution*, May 14, 1919; Judson, "Civil Rights and Civic Health," 101-2.
[424] *Annual Report of Atlanta Anti-Tuberculosis Association: For the Year 1917*, ALAC, Box 41, AHC.

canvassers reached approximately 22 percent of Atlanta's black population by visiting 3,786 homes housing 13,000 people.[425] For sixteen weeks, the campaign organizers held portable clinics in nine districts.[426] Over 640 people received medical care at these clinics.[427] Of the 641 total people served, 356 received referrals to the Medical College, ninety-two to the Anti-TB clinic, sixty-seven to the Dental College for treatment, forty to private doctors, and thirty-two to Grady Hospital (one of the few hospitals in Atlanta with a segregated ward for blacks, although the facilities were substandard at best).[428] Additionally, clinic workers assessed people's health conditions and found thirty-three in good condition and twenty-two with miscellaneous ailments.[429] Three people received referrals to Battle Hill Sanatorium and thirteen people had minor medical operations. The ATA trained nurses made follow-up visits to assure people adhered to the advice given during the campaign, highlighting the need for the ill to follow medical advice and take steps to prevent the return of the illness. NU reformers also arranged fifty-four speakers at twenty-seven mass church meetings, at one of which over 1,300 people attended.[430] The ability of this campaign to reach the masses demonstrates not only community interest in the topic of the campaign, but how public health work in black communities with African Americans leaders running the programs increased the neighborhood's interest in its own public health.[431]

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[425] Shivery, "The Neighborhood Union," 154; Judson, "Civil Rights and Civic Health," 101-2; *Statistical Abstract of the United States, 1920* (Washington D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1921); *Annual Report of Atlanta Anti-Tuberculosis Association: For the Year 1917*, ALAC, Box 41, AHC.
[426] Outline Anti-Tuberculosis Work, NUC, Box 10, AUC
[427] "Partial Report of the Neighborhood Union, 1919," NUC, Box 6, AHC; *Annual Report of Atlanta Anti-Tuberculosis Association: For the Year 1917*, ALAC, Box 41, AHC.
[428] Ronald H. Bayor, *Race and the Shaping of Twentieth Century Atlanta* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996), 9.
[429] *Annual Report of Atlanta Anti-Tuberculosis Association: For the Year 1917*, ALAC, Box 41, AHC
[430] Ibid.; "Partial Report of the Neighborhood Union, 1919," NUC, Box 6, AHC.
[431] Robert C. Dexter, "The Negro in Social Work," *The Survey,* vol. XLVI (June 25, 1921): 439-440.

NU clubwomen used their knowledge and connections to spread the word about the Medico-Educational Campaign. These women chose familiar community sites for the mobile clinics, including churches, the Gate City Free Kindergarten, home missions, and schools. Holding health clinics in spaces familiar to African Americans may have eased neighbors' possible anxieties about obtaining health services. Additionally, holding portable health clinics with black public health workers in well-known community landmarks showed that the neighborhoods stood behind and supported these public health measures.[432]

After the Medico-Educational Campaign, the 1917 Annual Report of the ATA chastised the city government for its failure to provide adequate recreation and sanitation services for black Atlantans. The ATA's scornful attitude toward the city for these shortcomings shows how the ATA's attitude, markedly different from the days when they directly blamed African Americans for disease and crime, progressed toward identifying the real culprit. The report attacked the city for "The failure of the City of Atlanta to make adequate provision for its very large colored population along any sort of uplift lines."[433] It continued, citing that the city had no parks or playgrounds for recreation, with run-down and unsanitary schools, and the need for construction of more schools, as most children participated in double sessions (limiting a day's instruction to only 3.5 hours).[434] The ATA made additional charges against the city including that they made little to no effort to keep streets and alleys tidy, that few streets had pavements, and that they failed to provide sanitation services since most blacks still used outdoor privies. The report stated that as an unhealthier group, the city must address the unhealthful public locations frequented by

[432] Judson, "Civil Rights and Civic Health," 109.
[433] *Annual Report of Atlanta Anti-Tuberculosis Association: For the Year 1917*, ALAC, Box 41, AHC.
[434] Ibid.

African Americans. The ATA's report continued, stating that progress could only occur with interracial cooperation and recognition and support from those in power.[435]

The change in the Atlanta Anti-Tuberculosis Association's attitude from once considering African Americans directly to blame for the spread of disease throughout both the black and white communities, to the association's recognition of environmental factors and the refusal of the city to provide needed services as the true mechanisms for the spread of disease resulted in a change in practice regarding how the ATA worked with the black community. Instead of preaching to African Americans and trying to impose their own moral standards upon this group of people whose lives drastically differed from those of white ATA members, it changed its tactics by urging for racial cooperation, understanding, and asking the city to supply much needed services. Although feelings of racial superiority still abounded within the ATA, including the organization's continued concern with the spread of tuberculosis and other diseases from black neighborhoods into white, the ATA had already realized that the only way to successfully fight tuberculosis involved acquire the guidance of those who knew their community best—African American leaders, such as members of the Neighborhood Union.[436]

The United States' entry into World War I changed the shape of Atlanta, as the government set up several training camps in the Atlanta area. Hope became involved in war work, but the most of the NU focused on their own platforms. The ATA, however, gave a shortened report of its medical activities in 1918, which resulted from a shortage of doctors to provide public services, since many left Atlanta to serve in the Great War. According to the report, "The medical work for the year has been more or less crippled, especially since an epidemic of influenza kept the few remaining men so busy that clinics necessarily were

[435] Ibid.
[436] Robert C. Dexter, "The Negro in Social Work," 439-440.

neglected."[437] During this time, the ATA cooperated with war work and saw fifty-six soldiers at their clinic.[438] Their involvement in war work demonstrates the ATA's valued standing, not only in the city of Atlanta, but across the United States. The organization's direct responsibility for the diagnoses and treatment of soldiers showed the government's faith in the ATA and their trust of the organization to provide accurate and adequate care.

The end of the Great War enabled the NU and ATA to re-establish their pre-war efforts in 1919. The war had stifled their efforts, but during this post-war period they experienced many successes. Another clean-up campaign ensued, with 143 health workers canvassing and surveying 5,406 homes and reaching 23,771 people, approximately 38 percent of Atlanta's black population.[439] The higher percentage of people reached demonstrates how the ATA had organized more effectively than in previous years. The NU and ATA gave talks at eight public schools, reaching 5,203 students. No data is provided detailing the topic of these discussions. The pennant, which the NU and ATA used as a prize for public schools, for the best public health work done by an individual school went to Taylor Street School. The ATA held eight clinics and referred seventy-five people for follow-up care. In total, the ATA and NU contacted approximately 34,125 people in some way for the clean-up campaign. A Mrs. H.R. Butler from the Neighborhood Union served as chairman of the clean-up campaign, which ran from May 26 to June 2, 1919.[440] White neighborhoods also held a clean-up campaign during different dates, allegedly because of "the lack of sufficient numbers of city trash carts to handle both at the same

[437] *Annual Report of Atlanta Anti-Tuberculosis Association: For the Year 1918*, ALAC, Box 41, AHC.
[438] Ibid.
[439] "Partial Report of the Neighborhood Union, 1919," NUC, Box 6, AUC; Judson, "Civil Rights and Civic Health," 123; Cynthia Neverdon-Morton, "Self-Help Programs as Educative Activities of Black Women in the South, 1895-1925: Focus on Four Key Areas," *The Journal of Negro Education*, vol. 51, no. 3, (Summer 1982): 217.
[440] Her husband, H.R. Butler, is well known for charging that poor ventilation was the chief cause of TB contagion. He also believed that home inspections, surveillance, and preventative education lay at the roots of TB reduction. Mrs. H.R. Butler's first name has not been discovered. Roberts Jr., *Infectious Fear*, 53.

time."[441] This demonstrated that the city began to cooperate in NU/ATA sponsored clean-up campaigns by collecting trash during the specified week. This tiny achievement represented a milestone, as the city began to provide more (although insufficient) municipal services beginning in the 1920s, discussed in chapter four. Yet, this made clean-up difficult because, "Many of our people start when the White people begun, they, therefore, have the trash stacked high weeks before the others begin" resulting in trash building up around the Neighborhood."[442] The ATA claimed it had cooperated and worked with the City Sanitary Department for six years, yet the department still rarely collected trash in black neighborhoods.[443]

The NU and ATA tackled the issue of public health from the perspective of poverty, lack of knowledge in individuals, families, and schools, and inequalities in municipal services. Governmental support would have resulted in regular trash collection, drained sewers, and paved streets, among other beneficial services. One public health educator, Alice Carey, a teacher at Morris Brown College, fought the notion that a lack of knowledge regarding public health and sanitation resulted from one's race or economic background. She charged, "The idea of cleanliness and the meaning of ventilation is easily impressed, but among all people there are those who have to be taught."[444] Carey acknowledged that although cleanliness and sanitation might appear obvious to many, others needed health and hygienic education to become healthy citizens. She furthered the idea that prevention through education remained the pivotal goal of

[441] Atlanta Anti-Tuberculosis Association: Report of Educational Department from June 12 to July 17, 1919, NUC, Box 6, AHC.
[442] Ibid.
[443] Ibid.
[444] Hunter, *To 'Joy My Freedom,* 214.

black health officials, the NU, and the ATA, as teaching individuals the value of sanitation and hygiene proved an effective strategy in the fight against TB and other diseases.[445]

After years of commitment to the concept of prevention through education and dedication to the health of the black community, following the 1919 clean-up campaign, Rosa Lowe, Executive Secretary of the "Negro" Branch of the Atlanta Anti-Tuberculosis Association, praised Lugenia Hope for her indefatigable work in the black community and her ability to educate the community about TB and other communicable diseases. She claimed, "As your qualifications as a worker you have the faculty of stirring up enthusiasm and organizing others to rally for a cause – you make a capable general. I am so glad to have your co-operation and leadership in connection with the work of fighting for better living conditions, educational facilities, and better health among the Colored people of Atlanta."[446]

Although the work of the black branch represented a communal effort, with several members of the Neighborhood Union as associates and representatives from black Atlanta's colleges, businesses, churches, and other self-help organizations participating, through Lugenia Hope the ATA successfully reached the black community when Hope turned outward and agreed to transform the ATA's movement among black Atlantans. The ATA accomplished this by reaching out to Hope for help, who readily responded. Hope also turned inward by using her connections to interest others in the work of the ATA and to rally prominent black leaders and everyday citizens to the cause of public health prevention and treatment through educative activities. Lowe acknowledged Hope's dedication and ability to sway others' opinions into one favorable to whatever Hope promoted. Without Hope, the black branch of the ATA would never

[445] *Annual Report of Atlanta Anti-Tuberculosis Association: For the Year 1915*, 1915, ALAC, Box 41, AHC; Outline Anti-Tuberculosis Work, NUC, Box 10, AUC.
[446] Miss Rosa Lowe to Mrs. Hope, October 6, 1919, NUC, Box 10, AUC.

have formed, nor would black neighborhoods have taken interest in personal and public health and hygiene. In June 1919, Hope became a full-time worker for the Educational Department of the ATA.[447] In her new role, Hope reflected the ATA and NU's message about the necessity of black public health workers, as demonstrated by a 1920 letter from the National Child Welfare Association in New York which stated, "It hardly seems fair that the Negro child should have all his teaching and idealism presented in terms of white people."[448] Hope understood that a knowledge of the people, the neighborhood, community associations, and churches was required to reach the masses, especially children. Hope's work demonstrated her extraordinary ability to garner support for social, health, and educational programs.

The Neighborhood Union and the Atlanta Anti-Tuberculosis Association greatly expanded their program after its initial inception. The Neighborhood Union's efforts started to change the West End of Atlanta from an unhealthy, disease-ridden neighborhood, into one with the potential to enact meaningful change. The NU and ATA successfully interested the community in public health measures, but still had trouble convincing blacks to come in for TB treatment. The Neighborhood Union obtained the most success in its battle for public health by turning both inward and outward: providing health care and programs the city failed to provide, and by aligning with the more powerful ATA. To attain their goals, the organizations embraced several strategies to find success, the most significant of which being prevention through education. The organizations maintained that stopping illness before it existed remained the most effective strategy for improving black health. Both associations focused on mothers, but for differing reasons: the ATA, believing mothers the fastest way to reach a large population and the

[447] *Annual Report of Atlanta Anti-Tuberculosis Association: For the Year 1919*, ALAC, Box 41, AHC; "Outline of Anti-Tuberculosis Work," 1919, NUC, Box 10, AUC.
[448] Leet B. Myers, Field Secretary for Negro Work of the National Child Welfare Association to Mrs. John Hope," August 24, 1920, NUC, Box 2, AUC.

NU believing mothers as the vehicles for raising healthy, responsible citizens. The Neighborhood Union visited and cared for sick neighbors from the beginning of its program. Regardless of illness and the chance of contagion, Neighborhood Union members walked into homes despite the risk of catching disease to help neighbors in need. They never forgot the inspiration for their efforts, the woman who died because her neighbors did not know her, and tirelessly tended to all sick individuals and families, making sure neighbors received comfort and care. The work of both associations continued during the 1920s with a new strategy: placing a strong emphasis on the public school system and prevention through education, believing that the lives of the entire city required reaching the most impressionable group—children.

Chapter Four
Education and Prevention: The Neighborhood Union and the Atlanta Anti-Tuberculosis Association, 1920-1931

The Neighborhood Union (NU) and the Atlanta Anti-Tuberculosis Association (ATA) had a history of closely cooperating through public lectures, clean-up campaigns, and Medico-Educational Campaigns. These organizations switched their tactics in 1920 from focusing on the general population to centering on children, a cohort they considered the easiest to influence and shape. The NU and ATA believed focusing on children would teach them, as future citizens, the value of public health and an awareness of tuberculosis (TB), which would not only help to foster personal citizenship knowledge and values, but would result in the dissemination of the organizations' messages about the importance of public health measures from these children to family members. In this manner, the NU and ATA trusted that children represented the fastest vehicle for spreading public health information. Subsequently, a child-centered focus would bring the most tangible gains to communal public health. Despite these organizations' beliefs, not all children preferred to participate in the offered treatment and education.

Though the Neighborhood Union and the Atlanta Anti-Tuberculosis Association possessed histories of great success in helping the black community, they could not force unwilling patients to accept treatment. Zvenia Jackson, a teenager sick with TB who refused treatment with the ATA, continued to attend public school and failed to report to the organizations' health clinics in 1923, is one example of a tubercular patient who rejected offered medical attention.[449] As a result of her refusal, the ATA and NU decided to discontinue providing Zvenia with charitable services, such as giving her free milk. These groups made

[449] Atlanta Anti-Tuberculosis Association: Minutes of Colored Branch, December 11, 1923, Atlanta Lung Association Collection (hereafter referred to as ALAC), Box 21, Atlanta History Center (hereafter referred to as AHC).

continued efforts to help Zvenia, with NU and ATA member Agnes Jones offering to check on her in attempts to convince her to adhere to medical advice, especially regarding attending school, as Zvenia's continued presence in school while sick with TB jeopardized the health of other students in her classroom.[450] As a result of coming into close contact with Zvenia at school, students faced the risk of TB infection, which spreads through regular, close exchanges with an infected person.[451] Though there are no records showing that she eventually accepted treatment, it is likely she did at the insistence of the Neighborhood Union and ATA, because a city directory listed her contact information in 1929. Moreover, the city directory still listed her in 1937, fourteen years after her positive diagnosis of tuberculosis.[452]

The ATA experienced many instances of patients, like Zvenia Jackson, refusing treatment, but in spite of this, the ATA and NU experienced more successes than it did failures, and ultimately convinced many people sick with TB to seek treatment. The majority of the Neighborhood Union's members came from the upper and middle-classes, and as pillars of the community, NU members represented zeniths of familial, domestic, and social life. The NU proved effective in its public health work since 1908, and through its cooperation with the ATA, the organization garnered even more power and respect as leaders than ever before. Although the

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[450] Ibid.

[451] Tera Hunter, *To 'Joy My Freedom: Southern Black Women's Lives and Labors after the Civil War* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1997), 194; Samuel Kelton Roberts Jr., *Infectious Fear: Politics, Disease, and the Health Effects of Segregation* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2009), 21.

[452] Ancestry, United States City Directories, 1821-1939, 1929, http://search.ancestry.com/cgi-bin/sse.dll?rank=1&new=1&MSAV=1&msT=1&gss=angs-g&gsfn=Zvenia+&gsln=Jackson&msbdy=1905&gskw=Atlanta&_83004002=black&cpxt=0&catBucket=rstp&uidh=vr6&msbdp=5&_83004003-n_xcl=m&cp=12&pcat=ROOT_CATEGORY&h=696626049&db=USDirectories&indiv=1&ml_rpos=2 [accessed December 16, 2013]; Ancestry, United States City Directories, 1821-1939, 1937, http://search.ancestry.com/cgi-bin/sse.dll?rank=1&new=1&MSAV=1&msT=1&gss=angs-g&gsfn=Zvenia+&gsln=Jackson&msbdy=1905&gskw=Atlanta&_83004002=black&cpxt=0&catBucket=rstp&uidh=vr6&msbdp=5&_83004003-n_xcl=m&cp=12&pcat=ROOT_CATEGORY&h=698507243&db=USDirectories&indiv=1&ml_rpos=3 [accessed December 16, 2013]

NU learned many skills from the ATA, the ATA gained much from the NU as well. As discussed in chapter three, the NU taught the ATA how to most effectively reach the black community, through black elites working as field workers, making direct contact with those they wished to help. The ATA also learned lessons in organization, fundraising, forming alliances, and developing strategies to improve its programs for black Atlanta from the Neighborhood Union. The ATA and the NU's sharing of knowledge and leaning upon one another strengthened their organizations.

This chapter examines the critical role that both the Neighborhood Union and the Atlanta Anti-Tuberculosis Association played in 1920s Atlanta, especially after 1922. This chapter extends existing scholarship by focusing on a subject previously neglected by historians: the Neighborhood Union's 1920s health campaigns. The ATA and NU's public health work has received wide coverage by historians throughout the decades, but with all of that interest focusing on the 1910s. This chapter's primary focus fills a void in scholarship by focusing on the NU and ATA's health work from 1922 onward. The NU and ATA's child-centered focus that dominated their strategies and tactics in the 1920s set the organizations apart, as other public health programs of the time in Atlanta did not employ similar strategies.

This chapter argues that the Neighborhood Union obtained the greatest success of all its various platforms during its 1920s' health campaigns by effectively using children as conveyors of public health information and participants in public health movements. The NU and ATA decided on this strategy by banking on the idea of children sharing the information they learned to influence adults, especially their parents, to value proper health and hygiene. They viewed children as malleable and able to be shaped, formed, and indoctrinated—thus making them able to become examples for the entire community. This focus on children during the 1920s

dramatically altered the West End of Atlanta and other black neighborhoods. Despite living in a society which denigrated African Americans and women of all races to a lower standard, the positive changes enacted by the NU and ATA, and the publicity garnered through children working as leaders in health campaigns, led to the city taking notice and beginning to provide (although minimal), municipal services for African Americans. In addition, the heavy participation of children piqued the interest of whites, with many associations and organizations, both national and local, participating. The organizations sought to accomplish their public health reform measures using two familiar strategies: prevention through education and focusing on children as future citizens. The NU's ever present practice of achieving prevention through education served as both associations' key strategy, becoming their most useful educational tactic. In their efforts to teach about the prevention of TB and other communicable diseases, the NU and ATA stayed committed to teaching preventative education in both the home and school. As a result of being the associations' key focus group, Atlanta children became the most active cohort involved in their clean-up and public health campaigns. They worked harder than any other age group and adhered to the NU motto of "Burn, Bury, Beautify," resulting in dramatic improvements in hygiene, cleanliness, and the prevention and treatment of communicable diseases.[453]

Once decided upon that they would focus on children, the NU and ATA identified that reaching children via the public school system as the easiest way to educate them about public health measures. In addition to receiving a traditional education in public school, the NU and ATA's efforts helped children to learn lessons in preventative education via exercises designed to promote enthusiasm for the associations' message amongst the students. Beginning in 1920,

[453] Report of National Negro Health Week, April 3-9, 1921, Neighborhood Union Collection (hereafter cited as NUC), Box 10, Atlanta History Center (hereafter cited as AUC).

the organizations initiated an annual Modern Health Crusade to interest and involve students in their own personal health and that of the community at large.[454] Atlanta represented only a microcosm of the important role children could play in the campaign for preventing the spread of TB. Another reason the NU and ATA decided to focus on children to bring about change is because they saw other public health workers nationwide use this strategy with great success that proved working with children the most efficient way to educate parents and the public.[455] This strategy remained a central focus of the NU and ATA throughout the 1920s and early 1930s, with members teaching information not only about TB, but additional public health issues as well, such as other communicable diseases, sanitation, and hygiene, in attempts to guide children into healthy adulthood.

The ATA, as an association devoted to the prevention and treatment of TB, also taught many additional preventative health measures to the black community, especially in the public schools. The ATA also greatly expanded their services to treat diseases and infections with a co-morbidity rate to TB to improve overall health, and to identify factors that likely contributed to the transmission of tuberculosis. Much like the Neighborhood Union, emphasizing prevention remained key to the ATA; despite this, however, both the NU and the ATA remained committed to treatment and providing care as well, keeping their clinics and dispensaries open and running daily

The ATA and NU also worked closely with the Atlanta School of Social Work (ASSW), of which the NU played a role in forming. In 1920, the Atlanta School of Social Work opened, with the goal of creating a new generation of trained, professional social workers. While still in

[454] *Annual Report of the Atlanta Anti-Tuberculosis Association*, 1920, ALAC, Box 41, AHC.
[455] Mark Caldwell, *The Last Crusade: The War on Consumption, 1862-1954* (New York: Atheneum, 1988), 59.

school, ASSW students interested in public health could work as interns for the NU and ATA. The NU and ATA used both interns and graduates from the school to canvass the neighborhood, work in the public schools, work at the Neighborhood House, and perform follow-up work for the Neighborhood Clinic and the ATA's dispensaries.

Including the addition of interns, much happened to the ATA during this era. For example, 1921 brought a change in the name of the ATA's "Negro branch" to the "Colored branch," as during this time period there existed a growing trend about concern for gender and racial issues; this name change resulted from that concern. During this period the term "Negro" became antiquated, with blacks preferring the word "Colored." Although the ATA and NU had previously found great success with its program centering on children, they faced financial troubles during the mid-1920s, as increased costs and joining the Community Chest restricted their funds. In 1927, the ATA ended its male hierarchy, which was present since the association's inception. In that same year, the ATA elected Agnes Jones (also of the NU) as the first female Vice President of the "Colored" branch of the association. Jones found success in her leadership role with the ATA, but as a member of the NU she faced a crisis involving the Urban League.[456] In 1927, because of a formal complaint lodged by the Urban League, the Community Chest restricted the work of the Neighborhood Union to running a pre-school only age health clinic, citing concern that the NU's work would over-lap with other agencies. The NU and the Atlanta Branch of the Urban League had an acrimonious history dating back many years. During the 1910s, even before the introduction of an Atlanta Branch, the National Urban League, claimed that the Neighborhood Union worked as a sub-organization for them, although the NU

The Health Center, Report, 1927, NUC, Box 5, AUC.

had denied their request for incorporation.[457] The NU and the Urban League's tension continued for decades, even though they cooperated on public health issues through agencies like the ATA.

Several of the ATA and NU's activities included educational courses and clean-up campaigns. According to historian Sarah Judson, these clean-up campaigns served two purposes: 1) To skillfully combat racist notions of inferiority by demonstrating that unsanitary and unhealthy environments, not ethnicity, triggered the proliferation of TB and other infections; and 2) To simultaneously unite communities through measures focused on improving public health.[458] The clean-up campaigns had become, by 1920, the most popular aspect of the NU and ATA's health program and brought the community together to promote healthful changes in their communities. The NU and ATA were not alone in their efforts to help with the TB epidemic, nor was Atlanta the only locale of this type of work. Beginning as early as the 1890s, northern cities such as New York City held preventative educational campaigns to educate the masses about TB.

Cities in the Northeast began tackling public health issues far earlier than southern cities, likely because of the larger population of the Northeast (especially in cities) than that of the South, and also the Northeast grasped the true cause of how TB spreads many years prior to the South understanding it. Historian Samuel Kelton Roberts, Jr. has also concluded that although environmental factors lay at the root of TB and its spread, white southern officials did not recognize these causal factors, preferring to attribute the cause as stemming from the

[457] Louie Davis Shivery, "The Neighborhood Union: A Survey of Social Welfare Movements among Negroes in Atlanta," *Phylon*, vol. 3, no.2, (2nd Qtr. 1942): 159.
[458] Sarah Judson, "Civil Rights and Civic Health: African American Women's Public Health Work in Early Twentieth-Century Atlanta," *NWSA Journal*, vol. 11, iss. 3, (Fall 1999): 105.

characterization of African Americans as lazy, defying medical attention, and lacking in hygiene and healthy diets.[459]

The ATA and NU represented a microcosm of the urban public health organizations across the nation, as many organizations and agencies in other cities worked toward preventative health measures, including TB work. As a result of the public health work taking place across the South during this time, most southern urban areas experienced a decline in death rates from tuberculosis for both whites and blacks. These cities included Nashville, Dallas, Birmingham, Fort Worth, Houston, Memphis, Norfolk, Richmond, New Orleans, Louisville, and Baltimore.[460] Many of these cities, (notably Baltimore and Memphis), made city-wide efforts at interracial cooperation to improve public health. Yet between 1920 and 1932, two southern cities did not fit in with this trend and experienced decreases in white deaths from tuberculosis, while simultaneously experiencing an increase in black deaths. Cities that experienced this trend included: Washington D.C. (29 percent decrease and 3 percent increase) and Atlanta (67 percent decrease versus a 9 percent increase).[461] Even the ATA's cooperation with the Neighborhood Union since 1908 could not prevent the increase in TB deaths among the black community. Washington D.C. and Atlanta's difference may have to do with conditions in those cities, such as city neglect, the denial of municipal services, minimum state-funded tubercular care for African Americans, and the city's placing of responsibility for tubercular care for blacks on private organizations, such as the ATA, who faced financial difficulties in the late 1920s, limiting their influence.

[459] Roberts Jr., *Infectious Fear*, 66.
[460] Ibid.
[461] Ibid., 33.

The black community across the United States experienced high rates of tubercular infection. Part of the reason for these high rates, aside from inadequate health care and poor living conditions, can be attributed to the sense of shame associated with having the disease. For over forty years (1890s–1930s), the guilt associated with TB infection caused many people to conceal their symptoms out of fears that friends and family would discover their illness.[462] As a result, "passing" became a popular activity among the infected.[463] In this instance, passing does not refer to a light-skinned African Americans passing for white, but to passing for not being TB-infected, which involved hiding symptoms and leading one's usual life while pretending not to carry the disease. "Passing" became especially prevalent by 1908, as eighty-four cities (Atlanta is not included in this list), required the registration of tubercular cases with the city and the disinfection of homes by the city, which resulted in discriminatory housing practices, as landlords refused to rent to tubercular patients.[464] People admitting to infection had much to lose, but by not sharing or seeking treatment for their conditions, they risked infecting those with whom they came in close contact, especially family members, ultimately exacerbating the problem and contributing to the spread of the disease.

Although many adults hid their symptoms, black anti-TB workers furthered their child-centered focus, believing that the public school system offered the best opportunity for supplying health education campaigns to the community. The NU and the ATA, collaborating with schoolteachers and principals, conducted an educational campaign that aimed for success by having students directly participate in activities designed to teach public health measures. Direct participation increased interest, and children readily participated in the campaign's activities,

[462] Sheila M. Rothman, *Living in the Shadow of Death: Tuberculosis and the Social Experience of Illness in American History* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkin University Press, 1994), 212.
[463] Ibid., 214.
[464] Ibid., 189.

which included clean-up campaigns, lessons in school, and daily inspections to adhere to proper hygiene. Additionally, each classroom elected captains to peer review the conditions of their classmates' yards; organizers employed this method in hopes that these reviews would help instill students with pride for having orderly homes, while simultaneously enabling the organization to surveil the neighborhood. The Modern Health Crusade, another of these campaigns geared toward school children, was initiated by Carrie Dukes, ATA health educator and NU member, and other public health reformers in 1920 as a long-term public health education program intended to involve students in public health work; the NU and ATA heavily participated in the Crusade to spread their public health messages.[465]

Held annually, the Crusade allowed children to take part and have pride in their communities. Children organized clean-up campaigns in which they collected trash and documented community conditions. Black ATA workers gave lectures to children about the relationship between clean homes and sanitary neighborhoods. In one class, students set up a mock government that supervised the class' health work and created a detailed plan for how the government could effectively employ municipal services to improve public health.[466] These exercises taught black children of both sexes important lessons in community building and urban politics. These lessons were given to both boys and girls even though African Americans, while possessing the franchise in local elections, could not take an active part in political life during this era because of both their race.[467] Black women, the group most far removed from the political process, knew that educating future adults about important issues regarding city functions and urban politics would prove crucial for helping to ensure that children became

[465] Judson, "Civil Rights and Civic Health," 106.
[466] Ibid.
[467] bell hooks, *Ain't I am Woman: Black Women and Feminism* (Cambridge: South End Press, 1981), 127.

responsible citizens capable of social politicization.[468] Involving children in politics gave them experience about how government functions and gave them a say in the political process, even if only in practice.[469] Creating an activity that taught public health measures and lessons on the provisions of municipal services, piqued children's interest, which resulted in them becoming the most active participants during public health campaigns.

Reaching the public and educating them about their health represented a critical need, and highlighting the prevention of TB and other diseases with children continued as a primary goal of the ATA and NU. According to the ATA, "Childhood is the most dangerous period for infection. No child should be kept in contact with a positive case of TB . . . It was hard to find TB in children in the beginning and that their resistance was such that if it became active in early life it was hard to bring about a cure without plenty of rest, fresh air, and food."[470] Aside from children's enthusiasm and willingness to participate in ATA health measures, the organization also decided to focus on children because of their especial susceptibility to TB and because environmental factors at both home and school contributed to its spread. Children died from TB at higher rates than adults, as their weaker, more immature immune systems could not fight the infection.[471] According to Roberts, African American children suffered and died from tuberculosis at staggering rates, which is demonstrated by a 74 percent higher average of national tubercular mortality rates for black children under the age of five that that of white children in the same age group in 1920.[472] This rate became even higher in later decades, with the rate reaching 343 percent in 1931 and, though falling a bit in the next decade, still at a

[468] Linda Kerber, "The Republican Mother: Women and the Enlightenment- An American Perspective," *American Quarterly*, vol. 28, no. 2 (Summer 1976): 204.
[469] "Social Service in Atlanta: The Anti-Tuberculosis Association," *Atlanta Constitution*, January 24, 1922.
[470] Minutes of the Colored Branch Tuberculosis Association, May 20, 1926, ALAC, Box 21, AHC.
[471] Roberts Jr., *Infectious Fear*, 66.
[472] Ibid., 23.

disproportionate rate of 310 percent in 1940, demonstrating how the Great Depression dramatically increased early childhood TB infection.[473] Because of these factors, the NU and ATA knew that reaching children with their anti-TB work was vital, and determined the best method for reaching them to be through the school. As a result, education designed to teach children to take active roles in personal, community, and home health care became an essential part of the preventative program sponsored by the NU and the ATA.

The annual clean-up campaigns, with a strong emphasis on child participation, embodied the most successful aspect of the public health movement in Atlanta during this time period. Although NU women's history of diligently addressing public health concerns to the city government resulted in some improvements for the community, these clean-up campaigns and the support of the ATA helped draw more public attention to the immediate needs of the black community. The campaigns received much needed publicity, and garnered support from prominent white allies, most notably, the main branch of the ATA. Working with the ATA allowed black anti-TB workers to further their influence as community representatives and allowed black clubwomen access to the city government.[474] The heavy participation of children, as a result of the NU's decision to focus on them, as both active participants in health campaigns and leaders in conveying public health messages contributed to the city finally beginning to address some of the needs of the black community due to the publicity these children's work received, which caught the attention of city officials. A few of these municipal victories included trash collection, installation of sewage drainage in many neighborhoods, and the city opening an outlet in the Health Department for both blacks and whites to report unsanitary conditions. The city also closed all discarded wells and made it a requirement for landlords to provide cistern

[473] Ibid.
[474] Judson, "Civil Rights and Civic Health," 106

water for residents, which would prevent many water-related diseases from spreading.[475] Thus, after years of petitioning for improvements, beginning clean-up campaigns in 1909, and attempting to get a building ordinance, the publicity the NU received through their own diligence, obtaining support from children, and through the ATA alliance, finally resulted in fairly significant improvements for conditions in black neighborhoods. The work of the ATA and the Neighborhood Union during this time also brought about real progress by lowering the tuberculosis death rate in Atlanta. In 1905, TB killed 295 Atlantans for every 100,000 residents. By 1920, that number fell to 105 per 100,000 (not differentiated by race).[476] The NU/ATA alliance, which had formed since 1908, undoubtedly contributed to this decline, as the ATA, along with NU workers, represented the primary agency working toward the prevention, treatment and cute of TB throughout the early twentieth century. This achievement, according to the *Atlanta Constitution*, "placed Atlanta in the lead of all southern cities in its success in conquering the disease."[477] This improvement demonstrated a marked change in the health of white Atlantans, but as the above statistics state, African Americans' infection rates increased and resulted in a higher mortality rate from TB for black Atlantans.

In 1921, the Neighborhood Union and the Atlanta Anti-Tuberculosis Association celebrated the fifth anniversary of their joint clean-up work by running another clean-up campaign, taking place from April 3 to April 9. Organizations representing both races collaborated in this fifth anniversary campaign, including the NU, ATA, Chamber of Commerce, the public school system, several life insurance companies (in which Carrie Taylor, ATA "Colored" Board of Directors member and employee at the Pilgrim Life Insurance Company,

[475] Cynthia Neverdon-Morton, "Self-Help Programs as Educative Activities of Black Women in the South, 1895-1925: Focus on Four Key Areas," *The Journal of Negro Education*, vol. 51, no. 3, (Summer 1982): 216-7.
[476] "Social Service in Atlanta: The Anti-Tuberculosis Association," *Atlanta Constitution*, January 24, 1922.
[477] Ibid.

assured the collaboration of her company), the YMCA, Atlanta Urban League, several ministers and churches, nurses, and the various black colleges operating in the area.[478] Truly a city-wide effort, this clean-up campaign embodied the spirit of racial cooperation and dedication from both the black and white communities, who worked together to improve city life for all its residents.

This campaign used a continued focus on children to accomplish its goals. For example, J.C. Robinson of the Chamber of Commerce, arranged a showing at a black theater house of a movie entitled "Solving the Boy Problem in Beautifying Vacant Lots."[479] The participation of the Chamber of Commerce demonstrates that whites and white officials had taken notice of the NU and ATA's effort, demonstrating additional interracial cooperation from those wielding power. Centering on children shows how the Chamber of Commerce recognized their influence and impact in the fight for black public health. Over 1,000 black children attended and watched the film.[480] The campaign also encouraged black children to work cleaning up streets and people's yards, who, while doing so, shouted the familiar motto of the clean-up campaigns, "Burn, Bury, Beautify." These children stood on street corners, chanting this mantra hoping that people would stop and ask about their message, with hopes of instilling community pride in individuals otherwise uninvolved in the campaign and convincing them to become concerned and join the campaign.[481] This enthusiastic method proved effective, with educated children often swaying adults to show an interest in the clean-up campaign and other health measures. Children helped to bring about significant successes for the community and filled many roles in the struggle for public health improvements, including acting as conveyors of information that

[478] Minutes of the Executive Committee of Clean-Up Week: Colored Branch of Anti-Tuberculosis Association, March 21 1921, NUC, Box 10, AUC.
[479] Ibid.
[480] Ibid.
[481] Ibid.

resulted in increased participation among adults previously unaffiliated with the campaign. Without the NU starting the trend of focusing on children to spread educational messages and inspiring others to do the same, these important efforts that helped to improve the community's public health may not have happened. Youths became the most active members involved in this clean-up campaign, validating the Neighborhood Union's general message that educating children from an early age would lead to the prevention of disease, vice, crime, and other maladies.

For this anniversary clean-up campaign, the president of the black branch of the ATA, J.A. Robinson, provided 50,000 leaflets on health that members distributed throughout African American zones.[482] The ATA also created 200 placards, placed around town, promoting the NU's "Burn, Bury, Beautify" motto. Both boys and girls worked tediously to ensure the success of this campaign. The boys, organized through the YMCA, and the girls through the public school system, accomplished various tasks, such as "cleaning off vacant lots, digging trenches to bury rubbish . . .plant[ing] flowers, run[ning] errands," and other activities.[483] The children cleared many vacant lots and in one zone ten vacant lots became playgrounds for black youths. The clean-up campaign, although having the support of the community, would not have achieved as much success without the active participation and enthusiasm of children.

During the 1921 anniversary clean-up campaign, workers visited 5,513 homes, reaching 23,369 individuals (37.3 percent of black Atlantans).[484] They distributed 583 pieces of literature, including pamphlets entitled, "Transmission of Disease by Flies" and "Malaria."[485] According to the Neighborhood Union, "The weight of this neglect cannot be appreciated without some

[482] Neverdon-Morton, "Self-Health Programs," 218
[483] *Report of Negro National Health Week- April 3-9, 1921*, NUC, Box 10, AUC.
[484] Untitled, N.D., NUC, Box 2, AUC.
[485] *Report of National Negro Health Week- April 3-9, 1921*, NUC, Box 10, AUC.

knowledge concerning the transmission of flies but when we realized that typhoid fever, diarrhoea [sic], enteritis, cholera, dysentery, intestinal infections, sleeping sickness and a number of other diseases are transmitted by flies, it gets to be an appalling situation."[486] As a result of the distribution of this literature, lime dealers donated twenty-five barrels of lime to kill both flies and rats and children took an active role in killing both for the safety of the community.[487]

During this campaign, the Neighborhood Union and cooperating agencies made numerous improvements: they repaired forty houses, paved two streets, and added one street light.[488] They filled twelve ditches in streets and the city placed two sewers on streets. The participation of the city in providing new sewers also demonstrates the far-reaching impact of the NU and ATA, and how their alliance garnered support from white authorities. The community painted thirteen houses, wired two for electricity, and fixed one toilet. According to the NU, statistically, "Insanitary places reported in 1917 were 104; insanitary places report in 1921 were 180; but strange to say none were repetitions of the 1917 complaints. It has been ascertained that many places previously reported have been remedied."[489] By studying the neighborhood, the ATA reported 42 percent of dwellings as unsanitary, in references to inadequate quantities of toilets and a lack of indoor plumbing.[490]

To calculate these statistics in an effort to aid the community, the Neighborhood Union once again conducted a house-by-house survey to determine the most persistent needs for the clean-up campaign. They found conditions including poorly working toilets, no lighting, failures of trash collectors providing services to certain areas, poor water connections, bad or unpaved

[486] Ibid.
[487] Ibid.
[488] Ibid.
[489] Ibid.
[490] Neverdon-Morton, "Self-Help Programs," 218

streets, and in some locations, the city still used black areas as dumping grounds for white garbage.[491] The vast majority of cases of bad conditions included issues with toilets, so one questions why the cooperating associations did not concentrate on fixing toilets since they represented the highest percentage of attribution to unsanitary conditions. Perhaps it proved the most difficult job, they lacked a sufficient number of plumbers working the campaign, or because children worked as the main group of campaign volunteers and lacked the necessary experience for addressing this type of work. Yet, the successful fifth anniversary of the NU and ATA's participation in the Atlanta clean-up campaign achieved much for the black community. Data for the clean-up campaign among the white community is beyond the scope of research for this study.

Although clean-up work and participation in National Negro Health Week have received attention from historians up to 1921, scholars have performed little analysis of data from 1922 onward. During this time, for people between the ages of twenty-five and forty-five, tuberculosis still caused one-third of all deaths across the nation (not differentiated by race).[492] In the ensuing years, the NU and the ATA remained in the forefront of operations regarding public health in black communities, using their incredibly effective strategies of instilling preventative education and enthusiasm in children. In 1922, Jesse O. Thomas of the National Urban League, a prominent, national African American association, approached the ATA asking to join its clean-up campaign operations. The NU and Urban League had conflict for years regarding the NU's affiliation (the Urban League claimed the NU worked as a sub-organization but the NU claimed to maintain its autonomy and only cooperate with the organization), but the NU, seeking allies against the fight for better health conditions in the schools, led the NU to believe the Urban

[491] *Chamber of Commerce*, April 1921, NUC Box 7, AHC.
[492] McBride, *Integrating the City of Medicine*, 52.

League had good intentions. Since a prominent national black organization wanted to help with the clean-up campaigns, the ATA voted to appoint a committee to attend a meeting of the Atlanta Urban League and it subsequently offered the following services: clerical work, half the distributable material, and the services of an educational agent.[493] In addition, several Urban League members officially joined the ATA. In April 1922, as a result of the meeting with the Urban League, an executive committee formed with the intention of instituting an Atlanta clean-up campaign; this committee included fifteen representatives from eight agencies: the "Anti-Tuberculosis Association, Atlanta Negro Business League, Associated Charities [Community Chest], Atlanta Negro Churches, Neighborhood Union, 'colored' [sic] Y.M.C.A., Atlanta Urban League, [and the] Atlanta Public Schools."[494] Additional agencies who participated in field work for this campaign included the Red Cross and the Atlanta Board of Health, further highlighting how the clean-up campaigns had transformed from a tiny enterprise in 1909, to now having the backing of the city and national organizations. Field Workers, "inspected homes and premises, gave direction and distributed literature."[495] Lugenia Hope served as the Chairman of Zone Workers, supervising seventeen different zones.

The clean-up campaign coincided with National Negro Health Week, observed April 2 –8, 1922, and began with "Sermon and Lecture Day" in Atlanta on Sunday, April 2. Ministers, doctors, and other qualified persons gave lectures and health sermons on various topics in local African American churches. Black professionals' proven ability to climb the social ladder inspired the working-class to generally trust their judgment; therefore, these lectures carried weight among the masses. One lecture emphasized awareness for mother and infant welfare

[493] Anti-Tuberculosis Association: Minutes of Colored Branch, March 16, 1922, ALAC, Box 21, AHC.
[494] Cleanup Campaign: Atlanta Georgia, April 1922, ALAC, Box 21, AHC.
[495] Ibid.

week, which aimed to reduce African American infant mortality rates through improving mothers' abilities to care for their children. It is unclear the date of mother and infant welfare week, but it received mention during the first day's lectures, implying the program would come soon. The second day of this campaign, labeled Hygiene Day, focused on raising awareness about good hygiene and its contribution to maintaining good health. Doctors, nurses, social workers, and anyone else qualified to speak about personal and public hygiene headed meetings, spreading information about "social hygiene education and venereal disease control measures."[496] Lecturers at these meetings employed various methods to disseminate this information, including the use of movies, exhibits, and slides that illustrated the importance of good health and the deleterious effects of poor hygiene.[497]

Tuesday, April 4 focused on discussions about the dangers of flies and mosquitos. As part of the day's activities, people checked all locations selling food and homes for flies and talks took place about the danger of diseases spread by insects and rats. The lecturer for this topic encouraged people to destroy the breeding places of these pests using lime. All homes, markets, bakeries, and food establishments needed screening against flies. Historian Glenda Gilmore contended that in urban areas flies created rampant problems, as they swarmed through homes and businesses. The death rate for both the black and white communities rose during "fly season," although at higher rates in black neighborhoods.[498] Flies respected neither color nor class, enabling infections and diseases from black communities to transmit diseases to all classes and into white communities.[499] The associations spearheading clean-up and National Negro

[496] "National Negro Health Week: Eighth Annual Clean-Up Campaign to be observed April 2-8, 1922," ALAC, Box 21, AHC.
[497] Ibid.
[498] Glenda Gilmore, *Gender and Jim Crow: Women and the Politics of White Supremacy in North Carolina, 1896-1920* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996), 169.
[499] Ibid.

Health Week dedicated Wednesday, April 5, to be especially focused on children. This day featured stories, parades, and health programs designed to pique the interest of children. Dedicating an entire day for child-centered activities demonstrates how the movement designed to use children as active participants during National Negro Health Week, knowing that heavy participation among youths would result in substantial changes for the black community, and possible national recognition from leaders of National Negro Health Week. The clean-up committee "suggested that, on or before this day, school buildings and premises be put in sanitary condition; and if programs are rendered in school buildings, parents and patrons be invited to attend."[500] During the programs on this day, a special commemoration celebrating the late Booker T. Washington took place.

Tuberculosis Day occurred on Thursday, April 6, with the purpose of spreading preventative education about the transmission of TB. Doctors, nurses, social workers, and others gave talks explaining that tuberculosis spread through carelessness—not genetics—and, if a family member became ill, one could become infected through contamination and close contact with that person, not through an innate predisposition for the disease. No one came closer to infected individuals than family members, and the lecturers sought to convince entire families to concern themselves with prevention, treatment, and cure. These lecturers emphasized achieving prevention via a healthy attitude and diet, fresh air, and living proper lifestyles.[501]

Church and Sanitation day fell on Friday, April 7, during which volunteers cleaned churches both inside and out. These workers placed any non-functioning or unsanitary toilets into proper condition and gave informal talks regarding these clean-up efforts. This obligation

[500] "National Negro Health Week: Eighth Annual Clean-Up Campaign to be observed April 2-8, 1922," ALAC, Box 21, AHC.
[501] Ibid.

fell heavily on any available plumbers, but regular citizens attempted and often succeeded at fixing the toilets themselves. Finally, on April 8, the neighborhood participated in a general clean-up day. This day, led by the Neighborhood Union, with heavy child participation, saw all buildings, homes, and other premises cleaned thoroughly. Afterward, the NU made a report documenting these efforts and sent it to members of the press and cooperating social agencies.[502]

Under the direction of Lugenia Hope, fourteen zone chairpersons reported on the weeklong campaign, and eighty-five people worked as officers and field workers. The chairpersons and the canvassers they supervised visited 3,739 homes, made nineteen talks and reached approximately 6,000 individuals.[503] The campaign's Clerical and Educational Work Committee, headed by the ATA, distributed 7,040 posters, 8,448 pieces of health education literature, and wrote and mailed 671 letters. Every year that the Neighborhood Union participated in clean-up week or National Negro Health Week showed a strong following from the community, but the active participation of children truly turned the campaigns into community building projects, assisting throughout their neighborhoods and rallying adults to the cause. With such a high death and disease rate for black Atlantans, and minimal health care available, the neighborhood residents took the campaigns seriously, once again turning inward to solve community problems The final total for National Negro Health Week included leadership conducted by 113 volunteers, 21,692 individuals participating in the clean-up campaign, 218 talks and lectures given, and one mass meeting with an audience of 2,000 people, demonstrating the far-reaching impact of the movements on the neighborhoods.[504] The Modern Health Crusade, also coincided and worked in conjunction with the clean-up campaign and National Negro

[502] Ibid.
[503] Cleanup Campaign: Atlanta Georgia, April 1922, ALAC, Box 21, AHC.
[504] Ibid.

Health Week, which included 14,115 children enrolled in the Modern Health Crusade, and included ninety-eight school visits, 269 talks, addressing a total of 9,890 school children.[505] These numbers, however, are not differentiated by race, as white schools also participated in the Modern Health Crusade.

African American school children's participation in the Modern Health Crusade numbered 3,185 students in the fourth through eighth grades, demonstrating how the Crusade heavily impacted the lives of children. The ATA, as part of its efforts, recorded anatomical data, by weighing and measuring each Modern Health Crusader and figuring this data into a national weight chart, which it showed to these children so they could see their weights in comparison to national standards of underweight, overweight, or correct weight. Although the ATA centered on TB, it knew the prevention of TB occurred through the addressing other health issues. Thus, although a TB centered organization, it expanded its program in the 1920s as a strategy to prevent TB, diseases, and infections with a co-morbidity rate, and used preventative tactics (such as weighing Modern Health Crusaders), to improve health among children and the general population. Many black students' sense of self-worth was marred by white perceptions of inferiority, and this work motivated black students to take an interest in their personal health, leading to an increased sense of personal pride; as a result, students undertook any necessary changes needed for improving their health. The volunteers running this activity gave the height and weight information to nurses, who conducted nutrition classes for the students to interest them in maintaining suitable diets, proper rest, and living healthy lifestyles, all methods to prevent disease or infection. In most schools, at least 50 percent of the children showed a normal weight, with Carrie Steele and Roach Street Schools the exceptions, with underweight students

[505] *Thirteenth Annual Report of the Atlanta Anti-Tuberculosis Association: For the Year 1922*, ALAC, Box 41, AHC.

the majority. Most schools had more children overweight than underweight, but the weighing showed at least 20 percent of the students to be underweight. As a result, the accompanying nutrition classes heavily emphasized weight-gain techniques for underweight children. For example, at Mitchell Street School the first weighing showed 12 percent underweight and 20 percent overweight. According to the ATA, "The second and third weighing showed steady increase toward normal weight for all, and at the last weighing only one pupil was found to be underweight."[506] The success in improving weight among children shows that children took public health campaigns and their personal health seriously, actively involving themselves in measures to correct personal defects and take pride in improving their health.

Some of the activities held during the third year of the Modern Health Crusade included plays, exercises, lessons on brushing teeth, singing songs, making posters, two health films, several performances from Cho-Cho the health clown, and daily inspections, all designed to pique interest among children. The most monumental accomplishment of the Modern Health Crusade in the public schools involved a clean-up mass meeting, where Crusaders from all of the different black schools convened to discuss the clean-up campaign and sing health songs. Over 1,000 children from fifteen different schools participated in this mass meeting. This meeting highlights the impact of children in public health movements, thousands participated, and the ability to hold a meeting with over 1,000 dedicated students, shows how seriously children took public health campaigns and spent their free time promoting health measures and clean-ups in their communities. Several contests took place between the schools, as competition increased public interest in the cause, especially among children. Pittsburg and Yonge St. Schools jointly won a Tin Can Contest by cleaning up their neighborhoods and collecting cans, four schools won

[506] Ibid.

an essay contest, and children assisted zone chairpersons in survey work. In addition to the Crusade materials, the executive committee overseeing the campaign from the ATA distributed 8,100 pieces of literature to children, teachers, and parents, from organizations such as the Department of Interior, Child Welfare Organization, National Dairy Council, and the Metropolitan Life Insurance Company.[507] Obtaining health literature from national and local (white) organizations demonstrates how the NU/ATA public health campaigns had reached a wider audience, with participation from outside groups assisting in the campaign. According to an ATA Educational Work report that discussed this campaign, children reported the open houses at their schools as their favorite part of the program. Activities in which these children participated included decorating their entire schools with posters, essays, bulletins, and other health exhibits, to display to their parents and any interested neighbors their contributions to public health awareness. Children took great pride in cleaning and decorating their schools, wanting to show off their accomplishments to the community and highlight measures they had taken to improve their neighborhoods. During the school year for 1921-1922, the committee overseeing the Modern Health Crusade made 309 personal and follow-up visits, organized 104 Educational Conferences, with 325 talks, reaching approximately 18,641 people. They issued 25,599 pieces of literature to African American neighborhoods, wrote fifteen articles for publication in local presses, and held twelve nutrition classes. Although the Modern Health Crusade centered on children, it also spread literature to adults, sought publicity, and publicly organized meetings to impart public health measures to the community.[508]

Shortly after this 1922 clean-up campaign, National Negro Health Week, and the Modern Health Crusade, the NU and ATA concluded its third year of educational work in the public

[507] Ibid.
[508] Ibid.

school system, claiming, "It is indeed gratifying to note the marked increase of interest in health Education demonstrated in the school, home and community life of the children."[509] Although children's interest in the ATA's movement greatly contributed to its success, the ATA attributed this increase, in part, to the higher rates of cooperating adults, including "teachers, doctors, nurses, and the Parent-Teacher Associations."[510] The Parent-Teacher Association (PTA) organized committees on health and educated one another during its meetings about health problems in the community and home. Its members passed out pamphlets provided by the ATA, called "Parent Teacher Program" and "Diet of the School Child." Although not differentiated by race, the ATA reported that in 1922, it held twenty-six talks with Parent-Teacher Associations, demonstrating the cooperation between parents, who educated children in the home, and teachers, through educational work in the schools.[511] The alliance between these two educators, mothers in the home and teachers in the schools undoubtedly encouraged the continuance of health and hygiene promotion in both locations. Quoting an unnamed principal, "never before have we undertaken a problem which is common with so many of the parents, everybody is eager to become informed and to act."[512]

Partially because of the accomplishments achieved in the Modern Health Crusade, tuberculosis work in Atlanta showed many improvements in 1922, and in September, the ATA held a joint session of the white and black branches to discuss the work of the year to date. At the same joint meeting, Katie Kelley, ATA member and new educational worker in African

[509] Atlanta Anti-Tuberculosis Association: Report of Educational Work in Public Schools (Colored Department); September 1921-May 1922, ALAC, Box 19, AHC.
[510] Ibid.
[511] *Thirteenth Annual Report of the Atlanta Anti-Tuberculosis Association: For the Year 1922*, ALAC, Box 41, AHC.
[512] Atlanta Anti-Tuberculosis Association: Report of Educational Work in Public Schools (Colored Department); September 1921-May 1922, ALAC, Box 19, AHC.

American schools, presented her annual report to the white members of the ATA and credited the year's successes to the cooperation between the races. Although interest in racial cooperation and harmony abounded at the meeting, attitudes of white supremacy still prevailed. According to the minute meetings, "Chrmn. J.A. Robinson next thanked the men of the white group for an opportunity to present the work of the Col. Branch, and expressed intense interest felt by him and his fellow-workers in the great fight against the white plague."[513] This statement illustrates that racial equality did not exist in the Atlanta Anti-Tuberculosis Association, which is made clear by Robinson's giving thanks to the white branch for allowing African Americans the opportunity to present their research in the fight against TB, indicating this opportunity for blacks to present this work to the white ATA branch to be a privilege. The main branch did not acknowledge or thank the black workers for their cooperation and presentations, not showing them the same gratitude given to white ATA members. This attitude shows that interracial cooperation did not necessarily foster a sense of equality between the races, with whites still demonstrating their assumed racial superiority.[514] The meeting also highlighted the ATA's efforts as one of the 1,200 groups working for the betterment of the cities, along with their work making Atlanta one of the 600 cities across the country conducting TB clinics.[515] Although convinced of their racial superiority, the white branch lauded black social workers for their tireless dedication to their communities. Roy P. Gates, the newly appointed executive secretary for the Five-Way (a region in Atlanta), stressed their significance, "Social Work was as much a profession as law or medicine, and . . . a

[513] Atlanta Anti-Tuberculosis Association: Minutes of Directors' Meeting, September 28, 1922 (Union Meeting), ALAC, Box 21, AHC.
[514] Gilmore, *Gender and Jim Crow,* 172.
[515] Atlanta Anti-Tuberculosis Association: Minutes of Directors' Meeting, September 28, 1922 (Union Meeting), ALAC, Box 21, AHC.

mistake made by a Social Worker in diagnosis might be just as fatal to a community as would a physician's mistake in a medical diagnosis in relation to the individual."[516]

While the NU had worked as untrained, volunteer social workers since its creation, the ATA and the NU frequently used the services of the Atlanta School of Social Work to complete their fact-finding missions."[517] The establishment of a Social Service Institute in 1919, and the subsequent construction of the Atlanta School of Social Work would professionalize the message of the Neighborhood Union and reach far more people through the work of trained, skilled social workers. Varying organizations debate over who founded the 1919 Social Service Institute in Atlanta. Typically, the Neighborhood Union has taken credit for its creation, and since held on the campus of Morehouse College, where John Hope served as president, this claim has much legitimacy. Louie Shivery attributes the creation of the Social Service Institute at the behest of the Neighborhood Union. "A Social Service Institute for colored [sic] people in Atlanta grew out of the need for trained workers to carry on the general activities of the Neighborhood Union."[518] Additionally, scores of women associated with the Neighborhood Union attended the first conference. Other organizations took credit for its establishment, however, including the Atlanta Urban League and the Atlanta Tuberculosis Association (formerly the Atlanta Anti-Tuberculosis Association). According to the Atlanta Tuberculosis Association (ATA), "In order to prepare our chairmen and workers for this work we are to launch a Social Service Institute in August—this institute to be held at Morehouse College."[519] Actually held September 23-26th, 1919, the ATA greatly contributed to the Social Service Institute, yet it represented only one of the many

[516] Ibid.
[517] Ibid.
[518]Louie Davis Shivery, "The Neighborhood Union," 156.
[519] Atlanta Anti-Tuberculosis Association: Report of Educational Department from June 12 to July 17, 1919, NUCBox 6, AUC.

organizations involved in its construction. Headed by Lugenia Hope, the Educational Agent for the ATA and Neighborhood Union founder, many individuals and associations either held attendance or participated directly in the institute, but the heavy participation of NU members, the holding of the institute at Morehouse, where Lugenia Hope's husband was president, and Lugenia Hope's role as leader and organizer of the campaign, demonstrated that the Neighborhood Union played the most active role in founding the institute.

The Social Service Institute had such success that Morehouse College, with the support of prominent black and white citizens, created the Atlanta School of Social Work, which opened in September, 1920 with fourteen students.[520] Through the Neighborhood Union's hard work, the ASSW filled a void in the black community and the NU played a direct role in its creation, furthering the transformation and uplift of the West End of Atlanta. The ASSW played a vital role in Atlanta's black community, by breaking new ground by training black social workers with a college education and learning the necessary skills to address the oft underserved black community. According to the Atlanta School of Social Work, "The fundamental purpose of the Atlanta School of Social Work is to serve as an institution for the training of Negroes for the profession of social work. It is rapidly becoming, in addition, a promotional agency for social welfare work among Negroes over a wide area of the South."[521] The organization obtained so much success and a reputation outside of Atlanta that in 1928 it obtained membership in the American Association of Social Work, making it the first accredited African American social work school in the world.[522] The Neighborhood Union had taken the task upon itself, beginning in 1908, but as untrained and unpaid volunteers. In spite of this, the NU did the best it could

[520] Bulletin of the Atlanta School of Social Work, 1924, John and Lugenia Burns Hope Collection, reel 16, AUC.
[521]Shivery, "The Neighborhood Union,"156.
[522] WHITNEY M. YOUNG, JR. SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK, http://www.cau.edu/acad_prog/soc_work/MSW_Catalog.pdf, [accessed January 18, 2014.]

without proper guidance or educated workers. The ASSW's contribution used adequate social work education necessary to accomplish this type of work, and would not have formed without the diligence of NU members.

Black social workers trained by the ASSW provided for the community in ways that white social workers could not.[523] Similar to their distrust of white public health officials, African Americans continued this distrust with white social workers as well, and thus trusted few whites who sought to review their homes, family lives, or how they cared for children.[524] White social workers in their work with the black community also made two key mistakes: they insisted that the people they surveyed adhere to white middle-class standards regarding home and social life or assumed that they did not have any personal standards regarding these issues.[525] The purpose of data collection about the black community from outsiders usually did not serve to benefit the black community; instead, its purpose served to support findings reinforcing stereotypes or denigrating the character of African Americans.[526]

Black social workers working in their own communities exhibited better attitudes and more success in their work than white social workers. A black social worker had familiarity with her (women served as the vast majority of social workers) client's background, neighborhood, and living conditions. She did not view her client as immoral or as lacking abilities for improvement. In addition, a level of trust already existed between black social workers and their clients, and if not, clients respected their authority.[527] According to social worker Robert C.

[523] Robert C. Dexter, "The Negro in Social Work," *The Survey,* vol. XLVI (June 25, 1921): 439-440.
[524] Sharla M. Fett, *Working Cures: Healing, Health and Power on Southern Slave Plantations* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002), ix.
[525] Robert C. Dexter, "The Negro in Social Work," *The Survey,* vol. XLVI (June 25, 1921): 439-440.
[526] Stephanie Shaw, *What A Woman Ought to Be and to Do: Black Professional Women Workers During the Jim Crow Era* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996), 167.
[527] Dexter, "The Negro in Social Work," 439-440.

Dexter of Atlanta, black social workers did not impose middle-class standards upon the poor (although this was often untrue).[528] He also contended that black social workers recognized among most of their clients an eagerness to educate and improve their children and subsequently the race at large.[529] Where white social workers looked upon the black community with scorn, black social workers looked with hope.

Although the ATA had obtained great success throughout its interracial campaigns and working with the ASSW, it faced money troubles in the 1920s. The Atlanta Anti-Tuberculosis Association along with other TB organizations across the country conducted Seal Sales as primary fundraising tactics. The ATA annually held its Seal Sale Campaign near Christmas, in which it raised funds by selling seals, essentially equivalent to postage stamps, for one cent. Because of financial difficulties, the ATA attempted to sell more seals in 1922, by having the Association's annual Seal Sale also include other activities aimed to promote the sale, such as a community singalong and the use of window displays at the front of businesses.[530] The "Colored" branch of the ATA sold $386.00 worth of Seals that year.[531] The ATA's frequent habit of running up debt throughout the year benefitted greatly from the Seal Sale, as its proceeds enabled the association to pay off its debts after the completion of the Seal campaigns at the end of each year. Children often assisted in the Seal Sale Campaign by either distributing advertising material, convincing their parents to purchase stamps, or doing administrative work to help the program. In 1927, for example, children from the public schools stuffed and stamped hundreds of envelopes as part of Seal Sale work.[532] Teachers and principals sanctioned this work, and

[528] Ibid.
[529] Ibid.
[530] Anti-Tuberculosis Association, Colored Branch, Minutes of Executive Committee, Seal Campaign, October 12, 1922, ALAC, Box 21, AHC.
[531] *Annual Report of the Atlanta Anti-Tuberculosis Association: For the Year 1922*, ALAC, Box 41, AHC.
[532] Ibid.

many classrooms dedicated certain times during the day processing letters to send in the mail. These children's participation in the ATA's fundraiser demonstrates that children not only took active interest in their own health and the prevention and cure of TB, but in that of their families and communities. The Seal Sale, much like the clean-up campaigns and National Negro Health Week truly represented a community-wide effort, with children again the most active participants working to improve the standing and lives of African Americans.

While the Seal Sale remained the ATA's primary fundraiser, the successes of the Modern Health Crusade and National Negro Health Week revealed an increased interest by the black community, but after fourteen years of work in African American neighborhoods, the ATA still had trouble convincing blacks to come into their clinics. While African Americans only made up about a third of the Atlanta population, they died from TB at much higher rates than the white community. Mary Dickinson, Secretary of the "Colored" branch of the ATA explained, "One reason why we were securing more white patients than colored [sic] according to population was because of the increased cooperation of Social agencies and business groups, and [she] suggested the need for greater vigilance of the colored people who know the advantages of the clinic."[533] Dickinson's statement reinforced white perceptions of blacks' disinterest in public health, claiming that individuals knew the value of good health (possibly through the numerous ATA and NU sponsored campaigns), but still refused treatment. This typecast African Americans as lazy and lacking concern for their personal health and well-being of their family and community. In reality, the city provided minimal support for black public health campaigns, and no city-run social agencies, such as the Health Department, adequately addressed the health needs of black Atlantans. Although social agencies and businesses in the black community cooperated with the

[533] Ibid.

ATA's "Colored" branch, Dickinson also explained that whites attended in greater numbers despite having a lower infection rate because the availability of social services for whites greatly exceeded those available to African Americans.

Until professional social workers could formally take over the surveying of poor public health causes in the black community, Mary Dickinson and Katie Kelley of the ATA shouldered the responsibility of addressing at risk areas in the neighborhood. Specifically, they reported on Washington Park, a new (and the city's only) park for African Americans that opened in the West End in 1923. The Neighborhood Union, while not directly involved in its creation, undoubtedly played a role in its formation, as its years of petitioning for healthful places for black children to play finally led to officials granting the formation of the park. Dickinson and Kelley provided an overview of the opening of the park and concerned themselves with park issues, including the probability of spreading disease and the supervision of children. On July 9, 1923, they examined the park's facilities to address these issues, finding some things adequate while others were inadequate.[534] First, they reviewed the playground and found it unsupervised, which the ladies considered a cause for concern. The park did employ a matron on duty to watch over the children, but according to the children interviewed, she had been several days' absent. The middle-class believed that children needed supervision, lest they become idle and shiftless without guidance, and expressed an uneasiness about the matron failing to fulfill her duty.[535] The women found the swimming pool in pristine condition, with separate swim days for boys and girls. Thus, the condition of the pool did not cause alarm about spreading disease, and the

[534] "Continuation of Welfare Study: Local Race Relationship Committee, Report No. 2," 1923, ALAC, Box 47, AHC.
[535] "Petition from the Women's Civic and Social Improvement Committee," August 19, 1913, NUC, Box 2, AUC.

separation of the sexes prevented intermingling and any potential for immorality between the two groups.

Dickinson and Kelley discovered the park facilities lacked tables, chairs, and proper grass-cover throughout the grounds.[536] They interviewed a Mr. McHenry, the park's grounds manager, who maintained he did all in his power to make the park look attractive for its visitors, but he recognized the need for installing benches. Mr. McHenry stated that he had enough lumber stacked in the pavilion to make fifty benches, but he needed the city to send a carpenter because he did not have the ability to build the benches himself.[537] Thus, though the park appeared well-kept, it lacked some necessary facilities and attendants to make it a complete success. The absence of benches and tables demonstrates the city's lack of careful planning for this park. Nonetheless, the city's creation of Washington Park demonstrated a strikingly different attitude than years past when the Neighborhood Union created its first playground at Morehouse College in 1909 because of the city's failure to provide recreational facilities for black children. Washington Park became the African American-designated public park in Atlanta, and the city's willingness to create such a large park with so many facilities demonstrates the extent of the progress achieved through the efforts of the Neighborhood Union and other associations. Washington Park still stands as of 2015 and is located near Booker T. Washington High School.

The NU and ATA concerned themselves with children, as demonstrated by the park survey and its various other activities, but also revealed an interest in helping mothers and future mothers, which indirectly benefitted children. Focusing on the latter two groups, Ludie Andrews, Neighborhood Union and ATA member and the first registered black nurse in the state of

[536] "Continuation of Welfare Study: Local Race Relationship Committee, Report No. 2," 1923, ALAC, Box 47, AHC.
[537] Ibid.

Georgia, ran Red Cross Certificate courses in home hygiene and care of the sick at Morehouse College and the NU's Neighborhood House. She reported information on these classes, which included student names and grade and the number of classes and students taught over several months. For example, in February 1924, she held two classes—one for city school teachers and a second one not related to the public school system. Some of the students in this second class came from the ASSW or local universities and may have had an interest in social work, public health, or nursing.[538] Some members of the Neighborhood Union participated in these classes. For example, in 1925, Hattie Watson, the first secretary of the Neighborhood Union, enrolled in the course.[539] Completing these classes gave students a Red Cross accreditation, which assisted them in their future studies and helped ASSW students obtain employment after graduation. Thirty-eight students participated, and at the end of February 1924, eight obtained eligibility for certification.[540] Each month the number of enrolled students varied, indicating that it likely did not take long to obtain a certificate. The Neighborhood Union lectured about home hygiene and care of the sick since its inception, but these Red Cross-sponsored classes enabled women to actually become certified in these topics, demonstrating official proficiency. The NU used their partnership with the Red Cross for two purposes—to conduct women-only classes allowing women to learn regular homemaking strategies validated by a certificate and to endorse their efforts by partnering with the well-respected, white-led organization. Thus, the Red Cross Certificate courses achieved multiple purposes: to further a long-standing agenda of the Neighborhood Union, to assist college students and teachers in their educations, and to help

[538] American Red Cross: Home Hygiene and Care of the Sick, Instructor's Narrative and Statistical Report, March 20, 1924. NUC, Box 5, AUC.
[539] The American Red Cross: Home Hygiene and Care of the Sick, Class Roll Report, January 30, 1925, NUC, Box 5, AUC.
[540] American Red Cross: Home Hygiene and Care of the Sick, Instructor's Narrative and Statistical Report, February 1924, NUC, Box 5, AUC.

housewives become better caregivers and mothers. The Red Cross Certificate courses exemplifies preventative education by emphasizing measures designed to treat and prevent the spread of disease or infection.

The Neighborhood Union had a busy year in 1924, the year it joined the Community Chest.[541] Membership in the Community Chest meant one received funding from the city-run organization, which managed thirty-eight charitable and social organizations, but all fundraising activities within organizations were expected to fund the Community Chest. Initially, the NU held fundraising drives for the benefit of its specific organization. Those activities were replaced with fundraising for the Community Chest, which doled out money to the organizations the Community Chest preferred or felt the neediest. Joining the Community Chest, unbeknownst at the time, stripped the NU of much of its autonomy, as they lost funding (previous NU fundraising efforts raised more money than the amount allotted by the Community Chest), had to adhere to a pre-school age only clinic (beginning in 1927), and underwent increased surveillance from the white-run organization. The Neighborhood Union, and other organizations working for the benefit of black Atlanta whom had joined the Community Chest often found they had to conform to Community Chest requirements, such as undergoing increased scrutiny and receiving less funding for their programs, ultimately leading to financial difficulties for both the NU and ATA (also a member of the Community Chest).[542]

The year the NU joined the Community Chest, 1924, also initiated a campaign by the "Colored" branch of the ATA named the "Health Trail," designed to provide free physical examinations to high school girls. Many girls during this time had physical defects that would

[541] Cynthia Neverdon-Morton, *Afro-American Women of the South and the Advancement of the Race, 1895-1925* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1989), 143; Karen Ferguson claims the NU joined the Chest in 1925; Karen Ferguson, *Black Politics in New Deal Atlanta* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002), 50.
[542] Ferguson, *Black Politics*, 44, 50.

affect them the rest of their lives unless they learned about them and subsequently corrected them, therefore, the ATA implemented the "Health Trail" campaign to identify these problems earlier in life. Health Trail workers referred girls identified as having defects to seek medical help if their families could afford it. For those who could not afford treatment, workers suggested school nurses contact social and medical agencies in the area in attempts to obtain treatment for these girls. This suggestion shows the "Colored" branch's efforts to make accommodations for poor and working-class children. Additionally, the branch hoped that black physicians would continue to volunteer at their clinics so these young women who could not afford medical care could receive treatment at the Neighborhood Clinic or other operating clinics throughout the city.

Across the nation, the black physician represented the central form of health care for the black community since individuals and families sought care from him (almost an exclusively male profession during this period) in more instances than from hospitals.[543] Many organizations worked to improve access for the black community to black physicians. Although a shortage in the number of black physicians made their work difficult, in Atlanta, many volunteered their time as they felt a commitment for the race and its overall health. The NU and ATA also hoped that black physicians could work at local hospitals, so as to encourage black people to seek care there. In fact, the "Colored" branch of the Atlanta Anti-Tuberculosis Association went on record, "saying that it favored the admittance of black physicians to the staff of hospitals; that they might more efficiently carry on their profession."[544] In 1919, the Atlanta Branch of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) wrote a letter to city officials regarding the lack of black physicians at Grady Hospital, claiming white doctors cared less for

[543] McBride, *Integrating the City of Medicine*, 10.
[544] Anti-Tuberculosis Association: Colored Branch, Minutes of Directors' Meeting, February 21, 1924, ALAC, Box 21, AHC.

black health and many blacks felt uncomfortable at segregated hospitals run by whites, often waiting until their ailments reached severe stages before seeking help.[545] With the inclusion of black physicians working in segregated wards, patients became more enthusiastic about their health and care. Without such addition, blacks often felt unwelcome at segregated hospitals, and did not seek care from the institutions in high numbers.[546] The ATA also promoted a movement led by the Baptist ministers of Georgia, who attempted to arrange for black physicians to work at Spelman Seminary (changed to Spelman College in 1927), where many Health Trail girls who lived nearby or attended the college preparatory classes could obtain services.

During the Health Trail campaign, 733 girls received examinations, with notifications of physical deficiencies sent to their parents.[547] Identifying health problems among teenage girls early represented a direct link to the value of preventative education. The sooner a problem was detected, the faster it could be remedied. Sponsored by the Junior Red Cross and supported by the ATA, Neighborhood Union and other organizations, they believed that as a result of the Health Trail, girls would partake in better habits of health and that parents would pay more attention to their children's physical conditions.[548] Partnering with the Junior Red Cross demonstrates continued interracial cooperation from whites outside the ATA, highlighting the enormity of NU/ATA health campaigns. Almost every aspect of the ATA/NU programs had some mechanism devised for the improvement in the lives of children of the race, which they considered vital to progressing race relations, hoping that as future citizens, the children they helped would become educated, responsible leaders in racial affairs. The Health Trail attempted

[545] Ronald H. Bayor, *Race and the Shaping of Twentieth Century Atlanta* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996), 156-7.
[546] Ibid., 157.
[547] Red Cross, Atlanta Chapter, to Mrs. Hope, February 20, 1924, NUC, Box 2, AUC.
[548] Ibid.

to achieve this goal by enabling girls to take "possession and knowledge of her own physical condition and stimulate her interest in bringing her up to a higher level of efficiency."[549] The Health Trail demonstrated to young women that they could take control over their own bodies. According to whites, black women lived wantonly and as a result their bodies naturally harbored disease and contaminated others.[550] The Health Trail helped refute these assertions and showed girls how they could live healthful lives and ignore stereotypes regarding their characters and abilities to spread disease.[551]

The clean-up campaign (coinciding with National Negro Health Week), and the annual Modern Health Crusade continued to take place and in 1924, the campaign suffered when its director, Educational Agent for the "Colored" branch of the ATA Katie Kelley, fell ill and took a six month leave of absence according to her doctor's recommendation. This temporary leave of absence eventually turned into a permanent one, leaving the Crusade without someone to lead it.[552] As a result, Ruby Busha, an ATA representative took over the Health Crusade pending the securement of a new educational agent, but under her leadership it did not meet the same successes as it had in previous years because of her less intensive approach. Specifically, Busha did not provide official ATA direction to most schools participating in the Health Crusade, but she did offer her services to any teacher who wished her to come into the schools and assist with health work.[553]

Atlanta won the national competition for National Negro Health Week in 1923 and even without the work of an educational agent, placed second for National Negro Health Week in

[549] Anti-Tuberculosis Association: Colored Branch, Minutes of Directors' Meeting, February 21, 1924, ALAC, Box 21, AHC.
[550] hooks, *Ain't I am Woman,* 52.
[551] Ibid., 60-3.
[552] Atlanta Anti-Tuberculosis Association: Minutes of the Colored Branch, October 23, 1924, ALAC, Box 21, AHC.
[553] Atlanta Anti-Tuberculosis Association, Colored Branch, November 20, 1924, ALAC, Box 21, AHC.

1926.[554] Beginning in 1924, the NU exercised complete control over the local program. The NU and other participating organizations presented a silver "loving cup" to the city zone with the most participation, creating competitions between different communities. Desired by all, winning the loving cup represented a source of pride for the African American community, especially among children.[555] Mayor Walter Sims praised the Neighborhood Union for its successes in winning the clean-up campaign and placing second for National Negro Health Week during his term as Mayor. According to Sims, "I wish to commend most heartily the Neighborhood Union and the work it has done among the colored people of Atlanta."[556] This compliment came directly from a mayor known to have Ku Klux Klan affiliations, demonstrating that even the NU and ATA's public health work took precedence over racial biases. Placing first in 1923 and second in 1926 demonstrates the magnitude of black Atlantans' participation in National Negro Health Week and the clean-up campaigns. Black communities across the country participated in the campaigns, and achieving such accomplishments brought credit to the long-standing work of the NU and the ATA on a national level. Winning this national competition likely resulted from the heavy participation of thousands of children across the city of Atlanta, as the Neighborhood Union's public health campaigns reached all black sections of the city, not just the West Side.

Despite the successes of National Negro Health Week, a medical report from 1925 showed that the total percentage of black patients receiving care at ATA clinics during that summer only amounted to about one-third of the cases.[557] In December of that year, the medical

[554] Monroe N. Work, Editor Negro Year Book, to Mrs. Ida B. Hill, November 20, 1926, NUC, Box 2, AUC.
[555] "Atlanta Wins Prize in Negro Health Drive," *Atlanta Constitution,* August 8, 1926; "Health Campaign Planned by Negroes," *Atlanta Constitution,* March 26, 1924; Shivery, "The Neighborhood Union," 154; Judson, "Civil Rights and Civic Health," 103-4;
[556] Mayor Walter Sims to whom it may Concern, December 30, 1926, NUC, (No Box), AUC.
[557] Minutes of the Meeting of the Colored Branch of the Tuberculosis Association, October 22, 1925, ALAC, Box 21, AHC.

report demonstrated that despite an existing shortage of nurses, "a very good degree of efficiency had been maintained and one interesting fact was that more children were being brought in for examination."[558] This reveals that the emphasis on prevention through education and the work done through the public school system may have had success and resulted in children influencing parents to take an active interest in their children's health. Children did not typically receive care at the clinic unattended, demonstrating a more conscious effort on the part of parents to take their children in for care, check-ups, and treatments, possibly as a result of the child's insistence. Children taking an active interest in their health often swayed family members into valuing personal and public health. The increase in children receiving check-ups for TB can be attributed to the heavy participation of children in health campaigns and their ability as conveyors of information to persuade their parents to seek treatment.

The medical report from March 18, 1926, revealed that African Americans again represented approximately one third of the patients seen for all types of medical treatment, at the ATA clinics and dispensaries, as the ATA had expanded their program to include treatment for diseases with a co-morbidity rate of TB, or health problems arising from a positive diagnosis.[559] This percentage represented an improvement in treatment rates, since ten years earlier only 26.7 percent of all patients seen were African American, but the number had remained consistent over the past few years.[560] Despite the increase in the numbers of blacks receiving TB treatment, African Americans still received positive diagnoses and died from TB at higher rates than whites. The report also showed that "in many instances the work done upon that group exceeded that done upon whites. For example: It was shown that more laboratory tests were made for the

[558] Minutes of the Meeting of the Colored Branch of the Tuberculosis Association, December 17, 1925, ALAC, Box 21, AHC.
[559] Minutes of the Colored Branch of the Tuberculosis Association, March 18, 1926, ALAC, Box 21, AHC.
[560] *Annual Report of the Atlanta Anti-Tuberculosis Association: For the Year 1916*, ALAC, Box 41, AHC.

sputum of colored patients than for white patients."[561] This trend can likely be attributed to whites' lower rates of TB infection, as they often received non-tubercular or doubtful diagnoses. As mentioned, African Americans tended to come to clinics and dispensaries only when their conditions worsened.

Strapped by financial problems, at an ATA meeting conducted the same day as the medical report, March 18, 1926, the association made three suggestions for publicity work in order to advertise the program of the "Colored" branch. The first suggestion involved meeting with ministers and other individuals in authority to discuss the value of educational and health work done among the black community. The ATA suggested to its members that they should try and convince local ministers to visit the ATA headquarters as a way to interest them in the ATA's work. The suggestion to focus on black ministers resulted from their roles in the community. Black ministers, with little supervisions from whites, could incorporate lessons into their sermons for their parishioners to include into their daily lives. The ATA hoped ministers would actively interest themselves in ATA programs and instill among church members the value of public health and TB prevention and treatment. In addition, the ATA intended for members to accomplish this first suggestion by meeting with three people each and extolling to them the values of both the medical and educational aspect of their program. The ATA hoped that reaching new people could increase membership and/or community participation. The second suggestion resulting from this meeting revolved around presenting ATA work to the Community Chest, an organization to which the ATA held membership. The ATA hoped that by sharing its work, the Community Chest would recognize its value and its many years of progress by continuing or even increasing funding. Restricted by finances, the ATA hoped the

[561] Minutes of the Colored Branch of the Tuberculosis Association, March 18, 1926, ALAC, Box 21, AHC.

Community Chest would see the value of its work, and possibly allocate more money for the organization to carry on its work. Finally, the third suggestion involved presenting the ATA's work to any other association for which ATA members held membership, with the intent of asking these organizations for an annual placement on their agendas for the ATA to present its TB work; ATA members believed this suggestion could be successful since many individuals in the ATA also belonged to or held affiliation with other organizations, which would help the ATA make new connections with interested and active individuals who could become allies in the fight against TB.[562]

Despite all of the work and achievements accomplished by the ATA, NU, and other various organizations, the African American death rate for TB continued to be much higher than that of the white population. For example, in 1926 African Americans died at rates almost three times higher than whites. During that year, 99 out of 100,000 white Atlantan deaths resulted from TB, with the black population experiencing 266 deaths per 100,000.[563] Despite this statistic, there existed some success cases. During a May 1926 meeting, the African American nurses of the ATA presented a demonstration on arrested cases of TB, bringing in a person in remission experiencing dramatically improved health. The ATA meeting minutes did not give the name of the person, but maintained, "This patient has been able to work and is healthy and happy and a living example of the ability of the individual to conquer the disease."[564]

Many African Americans successfully had their cases arrested with proper care, rest, and visiting the clinics, dispensaries, and/or sanatoriums. According to ATA files, one success story involved Maggie D., who obtained admittance to the Tuberculosis Association Clinic on

[562] Ibid.
[563] Minutes of the Meeting of the Colored Branch Tuberculosis Association, May 20, 1926, ALAC, Box 21, AHC; Mary Dickinson, Secretary and Treasurer to Mrs. Hope, June 14, 1926, NUC, Box 10, AUC.
[564] Minutes of the Meeting of the Colored Branch Tuberculosis Association, May 20, 1926, ALAC, Box 21, AHC.

December 21, 1922. Nineteen years old, married, and with a child, "She was diagnosed as a Positive Moderately Advanced case and was admitted to Battle Hill Sanatorium, Jan. 15, 1923."[565] She left after three months because her baby died, but later returned and stayed for seven months until her case became arrested. She continued to seek care at the clinic and professionals closely watched her. Her last clinic visit on May 6, 1926 found her in good health. She worked in domestic service and her husband had deserted her, but she remained healthy and financially provided for.[566] Maggie D. is considered a success story, since her treatment and following directions allowed the mitigation of her condition. Considering this patient's last visit to the clinic only two weeks prior to the May 20, 1926 meeting, she worked, and possessed good health, she may have represented the arrested case presented at the ATA meeting.

While actively enrolled in various public health measures aimed at children and the neighborhoods at large, in 1927, the ATA broke with tradition and elected its first woman to a major leadership role, with Agnes Jones (also of the NU) becoming the association's first female vice president.[567] Previously, in line with gender constructions, women did not hold top positions in the organization, instead serving in lesser positions, such as board members or as secretary or treasurer.[568] Jones' election confirmed the vital importance of women's roles in the organization and also signified the shifting attitudes during this era from once Victorian-dominated gender roles to more progressive views of gender and women's places in leadership. The election of Jones, who had become a major leader in the movement, shows how the ATA recognized the tireless work and many contributions of women to its movement. At this same election, voters

[565] Chart #3679- Maggie D., Tuberculosis Ass'n, (Colored), ALAC, Box 21, AHC.
[566] Ibid.
[567] Tuberculosis Association, 1927: Colored Board of Directors, ALAC, Box 21, AHC.
[568] Susan Smith, *Sick and Tired of Being Sick and Tired: Black Women's Health Activism in America* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1995), 1.

once again elected Mary Dickinson as joint secretary and treasurer. Many ATA members also affiliated with the Neighborhood Union won appointments for the ATA "Colored" branch's Board of Directors during this election. New board members included Ludie Andrews, of Morehouse College and the NU, Walter Chivers of the NU Board of Directors and Morehouse College, and Ida B. Hill of the NU. Returning board members included Carrie Taylor of the Pilgrim Life Insurance Company, Maud Watkins of the YWCA, Jesse O. Thomas of the Urban League and John and Lugenia Hope of the NU and Morehouse College.[569]

While Agnes Jones achieved recognition and success in the ATA, she, along with all NU members, suffered the same year. In 1927, the Community Chest forced the Neighborhood Union into a change that infringed on its mission to help all members of the black community. In this year, the Community Chest issued an order to the NU (a Community Chest member) restricting it to performing health clinic work for pre-school aged children only, because of assertions from other organizations, with their largest critic the Atlanta Urban League, that its work overlapped and conflicted with similar work performed by these other agencies. The Neighborhood Union and the Atlanta Urban League had a tenuous relationship at best, and this order only made it worse. Though they had decades of history cooperating through various agencies, tension always existed because of the Urban League's attempts to take credit for the NU's work, asserting that it was a sub-organization of the Urban League.[570]

Though the Community Chest limited the NU to performing pre-school age clinic work only, the organization relied on several strategies designed to ensure that it did not officially disobey the restriction while still ensuring its influence reached a wider audience. One strategy for circumventing the Community Cross' mandate included encouraging mothers to sign up for

[569] Tuberculosis Association, 1927: Colored Board of Directors, ALAC, Box 21, AHC.

Red Cross classes to become certified in areas such as the care of children, including pre-school children, following within the parameters of the Community Chest's mandate. In 1927, sixteen women, under the leadership of Ludie Andrews, obtained Red Cross Certificates as a result of the NU's efforts, and five of these women found better employment as a result of their certification.[571] Another strategy included incorporating mothers' club meetings into the pre-school clinic work, since many of the mothers' club attendees had pre-school-aged children. Mothers' clubs taught women valuable lessons in caring for the home, children, and personal, home, and neighborhood hygiene, becoming another avenue for teaching home techniques. With the inclusion of the mothers' club meetings into its pre-school clinic work, the NU increased the frequency of the meetings from once to twice a month, demonstrating an enlarged need for or even a heightened value of the skills learned at these meetings, such as child-rearing strategies, homemaking skills, and rudimentary care of the sick.[572] NU members taught information at these mothers' meetings that they believed pivotal in assisting women to raise health-minded, responsible citizens who would grow up to elevate the race. The majority of lessons imparted at mothers' meetings involved preventative education with the aim of stopping problems in the home before they happened. The last circumvention strategy was the NU's role in assisting students at the ASSW and Morehouse College to establish ten new clubs.[573] Allowing the colleges to take charge of these groups, gave the appearance that the NU merely worked as advisors or under the auspices of these local colleges.

In the late 1920s, the Atlanta Anti-Tuberculosis Association faced difficulties, much like the NU, forcing the organization to fall behind in its work. Its membership in the Community

[572] Minutes, December 3, 1908, NUC, Box 4, AUC; Minutes, December 17, 1908, NUC, Box 4, AUC.
[573] Ibid.

Chest also limited their funding, but the Community Chest allowed the ATA to continue its primary fundraising campaign, the Seal Sale. The association also had difficulty securing a permanent Educational Agent after the departure of Katie Kelley in 1924 and it constantly lacked the funds needed to accomplish effective educational work. For example, in 1927, an educational report regarding the weighing, measuring, and charting of school children showed that thirty-three white schools had completed the program, while only one black school, Yonge Street School, had done the same, demonstrating the effect of the lack of support of an educational agent in black schools. Without proper guidance, children could not effectively become leaders in public health campaigns. Along with difficulties in hiring and finances, the interest of the ATA's members began to wane, as attendance dropped off heavily and in some instances, dropped off at rates so staggering, meetings did not happen at all because of this lack of attendance. The ATA attempted to remedy this problem, and in response Secretary Mary Dickinson sent a letter to Board members asking for their attendance at the next meeting on January 15, 1928 to meet the newly hired African American ATA nurse.[574] As previously discussed, black nurses experienced more successes than white nurses in treating the black community because of African American's tendency to view white health professionals with suspicion, lessening their effectiveness. Increasing the number of black professionals on staff demonstrates the ATA's commitment to improving the collective health of black Atlanta.

In the late 1920s, the NU still worked with the ATA, but also concentrated on its new, pre-school only age clinic. The organization's 1928 semi-annual report for the NU pre-school clinic included various information about the children served. Dating from January 1 to June 15, 1928, the report showed that it held twenty-seven medical clinics, weighing and examining 182

[574] Executive Secretary of the Colored Branch of the Atlanta Anti-Tuberculosis Association to Dr. John Hope, 1928, ALAC, Box 19, AHC.

children from sixty-eight families. In addition, seventy-one children received free medicine and eleven were provided with free milk. The NU sponsored twelve dental clinics, where fifty-four patients received advice or treatment. Of the 182 children, eight children received referrals to Grady Hospital, which transferred two children to Battle Hill Sanatorium. As a result of these clinics, seventy-eight women enrolled in three health classes and ten women received Home Hygiene and Care of the Sick Certificates from the Red Cross. The Neighborhood Union, facing the restriction from the Community Chest, still obtained success through its clinic operation and covert measures to impart health values and treatment to as many people as possible.

Also during the late 1920s, the ATA and NU employed the strategy of hiring interns as an additional method of raising student interest in the organizations' cause and to influence students to become public health social workers after graduation. One paid intern for the "Colored" branch of the ATA, ASSW student Naomi Thomas, began her internship at the end of 1928 with a six month survey of children's health at Ashby Street Elementary School. Thomas concluded her six month study on nutrition in 1929.[575] She studied 192 children, but interviewed 604 students. She distributed 183 pamphlets, fifty-six booklets, six posters, and fifty Annual Reports.[576] She believed that she had brought many more educational opportunities to the black community and her work done at Ashby Street Elementary School demonstrated the devotion and the hard work interns expended in their casework; experiencing hands-on education undoubtedly helped interns in their future careers.[577] While the ATA had difficulty obtaining a new Educational Agent, one effective strategy would have been to secure more interns to work in the public schools, and overtake much of the work done by Katie Kelley, former Educational

[575] Minutes of the Meeting of the Colored Branch of the Tuberculosis Association, April 1929, ALAC, Box 21, AHC.
[576]Ibid.
[577] Atlanta Tuberculosis Association: Minutes of the Colored Branch, May 16, 1929, ALAC, Box 21, AHC.

Agent, yet financial constraints may have restricted the ATA's ability to hire more interns from the ASSW.

At the same meeting where Thomas made her presentation, a Mr. Walker noted that the purpose of the meeting revolved around the concerns and needs of the Educational Department. According to the meeting minutes, "The Secretary explained that for many years the Association had continued to stress the medical and nursing side of the question and after repeated experiments the Association had come to the conclusion that until the community as a whole became conscious of the need of early diagnosis and the prevention of Tuberculosis through sound health, that little progress could be made."[578] After a lengthy discussion, the branch decided to expand its educational program. In 1929, tuberculosis rates among African Americans still existed at epidemic proportions throughout the country, with African Americans making up roughly 25 percent of national tuberculosis deaths across the country.[579]

By 1930, health problems facing the black community, most notably deaths from tuberculosis, continued to exist at substantially higher rates than experienced in the white community. In Atlanta, the tubercular mortality rate for blacks was 268.75 for every 100,000 deaths, with the rate for whites much lower, at 51.05 per every 100,000 deaths.[580] The difficulties the "Colored" branch of the ATA experienced with convincing African Americans to seek treatment from clinics and sanatoriums during the Depression was evident during a November 1931 meeting. The ATA worried about the higher death rate among African Americans and how it related to the clinic and dispensaries. Both needed more patients: only one third of ATA

[578] Ibid.
[579] Roberts Jr., *Infectious Fear*, 33.
[580] Bayor, *Race and the Shaping*, 158.

patients came from the black community.[581] Because African Americans died from TB in higher numbers than whites, increasing blacks' use of the clinics and dispensaries proved essential to ensure that they received the care they needed. The ATA wanted to increase these numbers, hoping to change its patient ratio to an equal number of white and black patients. The ATA Secretary offered several explanations for this shortcoming. The secretary described the flaw with the statement, "Many of these people were very poor and lived in crowded houses and were constantly infecting other people, an important factor in increasing the high death rate. Doctors have advised these people and nurses have tried to persuade them and they still refuse. Many people go to the sanatorium not because they want to go themselves but for the sake of their families."[582] Rather than tackle the problem themselves, the ATA suggested members ask black ministers to preach to their congregations about the importance of treatment. Using the church to spread its message was a common strategy the association had used for decades, but it is the only solution the ATA offered for this problem.

At the end of 1931, the Atlanta Tuberculosis Association held its twenty-fifth annual Christmas Seal Sale. After all these years, the seals still cost only one cent and could be used as postage on Christmas letters and packages (along with regular mail). The ATA sent a mass letter describing the campaign to individuals, organizations and churches, stating, "Year by year our preventive program grows stronger. The skin test for detecting tuberculosis infection in children, the increased use of X-rays, the intelligent early treatment, the common sense application of health education, are all factors which have helped to increase the number of cured cases and provided protection to the community."[583] By this time, the ATA had made much progress since

[581] Minutes of the Meeting of the Colored Branch, Atlanta Tuberculosis Association, November 19, 1931, ALAC, Box 21, AHC.
[582] Ibid.
[583] Twenty-Fifth Annual Christmas Seal Sale, 1931, ALAC, Box 19, AUC.

its founding in 1907. With the advent of new technology for the detection of disease, the organization expanded their clinics to provide treatment for diseases with a co-morbidity rate with TB. It also became able to more effectively diagnose cases, leading to improved prevention and treatment programs.

The conclusion of the twenty-fifth annual Seal Sale marked the end of the ATA "Colored" branch's dominating influence in public health for African American Atlantans, although they continued to meet for several more years. As the Depression worsened, cooperation between organizations and associations fell to the wayside, with focusing on one's own program becoming more commonplace. The Neighborhood Union and the ATA dramatically improved the health of the West End and other black communities through its effective method of using children as active participants and conveyers of public health messages. Children became the most active participants and relayed information to their families and the masses, increasing participation among people previously unaffiliated with public health campaigns. The success of the NU/ATA public health campaigns yielded cooperation from white-run organizations and the government, including the Department of the Interior, the Red Cross, and the Chamber of Commerce. The neighborhood also saw the addition of Washington Park, which the NU's years of petitioning for playgrounds played a role in its formation. In addition, the city finally began to address some municipal problems in the neighborhood after the success of its yearly health campaigns in which children played critical roles. Finally, the Neighborhood Union played a direct role in the founding of the Atlanta School of Social Work. The NU had the most far-reaching impact on the West End of Atlanta through the provision of public health care and education. The Neighborhood Union had worked in conjunction with the ATA for twenty-three years, with their most successful work accomplished through preventative

educational measures designed to ensure that the public received necessary information and that children received health education in school. The ATA and NU experienced great successes with a central strategy in the 1920s of focusing mainly on children as influencers of opinion and future leaders. The needs of the community changed because of the financial collapse and resulting Great Depression and the Neighborhood Union, although confined by the Community Chest since 1927 to performing pre-school age clinic work only, knew it could not sit idly by and watch the black community suffer; therefore from 1931 through 1932, the NU defied the Community Chest's orders and established an organization designed to help the black community face the devastation of the Depression— the West Side Unemployment Relief Committee.

Chapter Five
Fighting the Great Depression:
The West Side Unemployment Relief Committee

When the Great Depression began, the Neighborhood Union (NU) rose to the challenge of providing direct relief to its community. To assist its neighbors devastated by the Depression, however, forced the NU to defy the order of the Community Chest to limit its work to running a pre-school age clinic. As a way to circumvent directly defying this order, the NU formed the Westside Unemployment Relief Committee (WURC) in January 1931. Although curtailed by the Community Chest, NU leaders felt justified in this defiance because they believed, as elite members in their community, that they held a responsibility to help the less fortunate black citizenry in their neighborhood.[584]

The formation of WURC resulted from the terrible hardship that the Great Depression brought to the nation, which hurt already struggling American families. WURC strove to help alleviate these problems by bringing aid, either long-term relief measures such as finding employment for those needing work, or short term relief such as food and fuel, to these families. One of the earliest examples of WURC helping a family struck down by the Depression was the case of the Green family. Prior to the Depression, this once-middle-class family lived in the suburb of Senoia, Georgia, thirty-eight miles away from Atlanta. The family had nine children: seven girls and two boys, ranging in age from five to twenty-seven. By the time the Depression began, three of the seven daughters were married and living outside of the family home. The father worked in Atlanta as a skilled brick masonry and cement finishing worker during the week and spent his weekends in Senoia with his family.[585]

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[584] The West Sidd [sic] Unemployment Relief Committee Issues Its Annual Report, Neighborhood Union Collection (hereafter referred to as NUC), Box 9, Atlanta University Center (hereafter referred to as AUC).
[585] "Cases: The Family of Mrs. Green," January 1931, NUC, Box 9, AUC.

Once the Depression began, job opportunities dried up, making it difficult for Mr. Green to find work. Additionally, in 1930, Mr. Green's health began to fail, which made working even more difficult. As a result, Mrs. Green and the children moved to Atlanta to cut the family's expenses, by eliminating the extra costs associated with maintaining two residences, one in Senoia at the family home, the other in Atlanta where Mr. Green worked. The plan to lower their expenses did not go as hoped, as the family made bad decisions that even further strained their finances. In Atlanta, the Greens moved into an over-priced home in a formerly white neighborhood that they could not afford and paid an exorbitant $2,000 down payment that further strained their finances. According to Louie Shivery, long time NU secretary and historian, "On a visit to the home the mother freely told the story that we recorded stating that her husband had not had work for six months, that they had gotten behind on their notes on the home and had been given three days to vacate the house."[586]

Additional hardships for the family included having more mouths to feed because many of the Green's adult children and their families moved back in with their parents as a result of various misfortunes. Deserted by her husband, one daughter moved into the home with a three month old baby. Another pregnant daughter joined the home after her husband failed to find work. A third daughter, a Mrs. Davis, became widowed after the murder of her husband and Mrs. Green paid the burial expenses for her son-in-law, placing further financial strain on the family. After the funeral, Mrs. Green moved her daughter, also pregnant at the time, and her two young children to into the family's Atlanta home, bringing the total number of people living under one roof to fourteen.[587] This move demonstrates a common situation during the Depression, in which families often moved in with neighbors or extended family members as a means of pooling

[586] Ibid.
[587] Ibid.

together their meager resources. Poor blacks and whites used this strategy much earlier, with several families often living in one home to reduce expenses. To make matters worse for the Green family, an adult daughter, Mrs. Davis, passed away during childbirth in January 1931; two weeks later, Mrs. Davis' two year old son died as well, leaving Mrs. Green in charge of her daughter's five-year-old and newborn child. These hardships proved too much for the family to bear, and WURC, upon hearing about the Green's quandary stepped in to help, providing fuel and cloth, and made sure that the family's children received healthcare at the Neighborhood Clinic, the NU's health clinic. Since under the threat of eviction, WURC also helped the family find a new home, and one anonymous member of the committee helped even further by paying the family's first month's rent and moving expenses. At this point, life improved for the family—Mr. Green found odd jobs and one of the daughters secured employment that paid $10.00 a week. WURC, a private organization created by the Neighborhood Union, and the Family Welfare Society, the primary city-run relief agency in Atlanta, continued to provide aid, even though the family could now afford to pay its rent. WURC records show that in May 1931, Mr. Green's health worsened and he died from a heart attack. After this event, WURC's record of the Greens end, so the ultimate fate of the family is unknown.[588]

Witnessing the hardships of their neighbors motivated the Neighborhood Union to form the Westside Unemployment Relief Committee in January 1931. This chapter argues that the creation of WURC represented the last attempt of the Neighborhood Union to bring about significant changes to the West End, through providing direct relief for neighbors devastated by the Great Depression. While the only city-run relief agency in Atlanta, the Family Welfare Society, centered on whites first, WURC attempted to mimic some aspects of the Family Welfare

[588] Ibid.

Society in the black community, by assisting in finding employment, doling out food, fuel, and clothes, and increasing residents' access to the Neighborhood Clinic. They differed from the Family Welfare Society by finding more inventive ways to raise funds, such as appealing to neighbors for donations, adding a personal touch to relief efforts, and holding fundraising events, such as the largest NU/WURC carnival to date. Differing from previous NU strategies, WURC focused solely on the West End of Atlanta, while other NU uplift strategies targeted blacks in all neighborhoods. The NU continued its commitment to prevention through education under the umbrella of their newly formed WURC organization. As neighbors suffered from the Depression, WURC sought to prevent families from unemployment by finding employment for some families and temporary relief measures for others. The idea of finding permanent relief meant to keep families from needing public assistance and to assist poverty-stricken families. Carrying on its efforts to provide temporary and permanent relief for families in need through preventative measures and keeping children enrolled in schools remained a central goal.

WURC was completely run, financed, and organized by black leaders, mostly from the NU. Background information about the Great Depression will be addressed to provide context for WURC's efforts. The committee's cooperation with local agencies, its fact-finding missions, and fundraising activities also receive attention. WURC and other African American-centered organizations used the services of students from the Atlanta School of Social Work (ASSW) to conduct surveys with the purposes of highlighting the enormity of the hardships the black community faced as a result of the Depression. Although it primarily focused on the African American community as whole, WURC also directed some efforts toward black children, providing them with clothing to attend school and free lunches. WURC's efforts were short-lived, however, because after one year, the committee discontinued its work after complaints

made by the Community Chest about it overlapping with work done by other organizations and defying its order for the NU to maintain a pre-school age clinic only. Though temporary, WURC represented one avenue that the NU took to improve its community when the city neglected to effectively provide relief for black Atlantans during the Great Depression.

The acute discrimination that black communities faced during the Depression, such as losing out on jobs and aid to whites, led them to turn inward once again. As they had in the past, blacks organized their own relief committees and frugally used the little funding the city government did provide.[589] Citizens begged the NU, the chief organization working toward the welfare of blacks, to assess the situation, as its years of community organizing had already provided great benefit to the neighborhood.[590] The NU knew it could not sit by and watch its community suffer, as the Depression hit the West End especially hard. Although the Community Chest had restricted the association to running a public health clinic for pre-school-aged children only, it violated this order and decided to help. Something or someone had to provide relief to the West End neighborhood in Atlanta, and the NU stepped up to meet the demand. Once again, the NU turned away from white society, rejecting the city's neglect of black neighborhoods and worked to confront the issue from within.

In response to the public demand for the NU's help the NU held its first meeting to discuss the crisis on January 2, 1931. After referring the issue to its Board of Directors, the NU formed the West Side Unemployment Relief Committee on January 20, 1931. WURC, spearheaded by the NU, called for cooperation with other aid groups, such as the Atlanta School

[589] Ronald H. Bayor, *Race and the Shaping of Twentieth Century Atlanta* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996), 104.
[590] Jacqueline Anne Rouse, *Lugenia Burns Hope: Black Southern Reformer* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1989), 86-7.

of Social Work, churches, charities, and other African American-centered organizations.[591] Although the NU took the lead in the formation of WURC, it represented a community effort, as many people and groups unaffiliated with the NU joined WURC to fight the Depression. Much like her organizational style with the NU, Lugenia Hope set up an Executive Committee made up of WURC members, comprised of two members from each district (thirty-two members total) in the West End neighborhood, with a chairperson leading each division. The Executive Committee had several sub-committees, including an Educational Committee, Clinic Committee, Special Case and Medical Relief Committee, Unemployment Committee, Garden Committee, Ways and Means Committee, Finance Committee, and a Health and Sanitation Committee.[592]

Setting up WURC put the NU in direct defiance of the Community Chest's order to running health clinics for preschoolers, but the NU claimed, "it could not turn a deaf ear to the cry of need in the emergency of the unemployment crisis of 1931 continuing Relief Committee of the NU launched a relief drive, mapped out a year's program, to aid and keep children well and in school, and to keep the family well . . . in this way to aid in reducing the death rate and crime."[593] Harking back to the NU's commitment to prevention through education, the newly formed WURC sought to assist family members while keeping children enrolled in school, and by reducing disease and crime that so often bred in poverty-like conditions. Additionally, members of WURC, like the NU, included many middle-class black men but also middle-class black mothers who, through their efforts with WURC, would extend their motherly roles to the

[591] Karen Ferguson, *Black Politics in New Deal Atlanta* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002), 52.
[592] Ibid.
[593] The West Side Unemployment Committee Issues Its Annual Report: July 1, 1931 to January, 1932, 1932, NUC Box 9, AUC.

entire community—as caretakers of the home and race and as leaders working for the common good of the African American community.[594]

When the committee formed, it set a goal to be active for two years, which it considered the amount of time needed that would enable WURC to make a difference in the community. According to WURC, "The objective of the relief committee is not only to help with the unemployed today, but making a sufficiently strong organization to stand for at least two years in order to hold the family together, that they maintain their respectability, [and] give what they need in the home. Watch over them and help them get on their feet—because the situation may last longer than we expect."[595] The organization recognized the severity of the financial crisis and realized it could last longer than anticipated. By keeping a sound organization, similar to the Family Welfare Society, for a minimum of two years, WURC could canvass the neighborhood, make reports, fundraise, and assist its neighbors with finances, work, and education.

Those involved in the West Side Unemployment Relief Committee consisted of a who's who of NU members. An official roster provided the names of members, their addresses, and occupations. Committee members represented a cross section of black professionals in the area, and included: Dr. John Hope, President of Atlanta University, and his wife, Lugenia Hope, NU leader; Louie Shivery, educator and historian for the NU; Agnes Jones, NU member and "Colored" branch of the ATA's Vice President; a Dr. Sherrard, who volunteered at the Neighborhood Clinic along with his wife; a Miss Buchanan, teacher; a Mr. and Mrs. Carmichael, missionaries; a Dr. R.M. Reddick, another volunteer at the Neighborhood Clinic; Dr. Raymond Carter, a physician, and his wife, an educator; Howard Pitts, a business man, and his wife, a

[594] Kimberle Crenshaw, "Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence against Women of Color," *Stanford Law Review*, vol. 43, no. 6 (July 1991): 1241-1299.
[595] Minutes of the Neighborhood Union, (hereafter cited as Minutes), March 31, 1931, NUC, Box 9, AUC.

social worker; a Mr. and Mrs. Yates, pharmacy owners; Norris Herndon, insurance broker; Geo Hayes, Atlanta University faculty member; Henry Shorter, a barber, and his wife, an R.N. Nurse and NU member; Mattie Walker, educator; and a Dr. Florence M. Reed, an educator at Spelman College.[596] It is difficult to find first names of many individuals, because the proper form of identification and salutation of the time involved addressing one another as "Mr." or "Mrs." Other people on the committee included NU members and prominent members of the community. WURC leaders, the vast majority of whom resided in the middle-class, lived more comfortably than their neighbors. Committee members felt that their higher socioeconomic status, along with the majority having more job stability than the average citizen, made it their responsibility to help others by using their free time and energies to assist neighbors in need. To adequately assess the impact of WURC, it is necessary to understand the conditions under which both black and white Americans suffered.

The Great Depression affected the entire nation. According to historian Harvard Sitkoff, by 1931, one-third of southern African Americans were unemployed. The following year, that number increased to one-half.[597] By the 1932 election year, approximately 28 million American households lacked any form of employment.[598] The national unemployment rate reached 25- 30 percent by 1933 with African Americans hit especially hard.[599] In the South, companies often only hired black employees as a last resort; during the Depression, when massive layoffs occurred, companies frequently adhered to the practice of "last hired, first fired," which meant

[596] Official Roster of the Unemployment Relief Committee Westside, 1931, NUC, Box 9, AUC.
[597] Harvard Sitkoff, *A New Deal for Blacks: The Emergence of Civil Rights as a National Issue, Volume I: The Depression Decade* (Oxford: University Press, 1978), 36; Jacqueline Jones, *Labor of Love, Labor of Sorrow: Black Women, Work, and the Family, from Slavery to the Present* (New York: Basic Books, 2010), 164.
[598] Sitkoff, *A New Deal for Blacks,* 209.
[599] David E. Kyvig, *Daily Life in the United States, 1920-1940: How Americans Lived through the Roaring Twenties and the Great Depression* (Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, 2002), 221.

that blacks lost their jobs more frequently than whites, adding to the overwhelming percentage of homeless and jobless African Americans living in abject poverty.[600] Making the job situation even worse in Atlanta, rural blacks flocked to southern cities, hoping to find employment opportunities. After the World War I wartime boom in southern agriculture diminished, even prior to the Great Depression, many black sharecroppers and tenants lost their land and flocked to Atlanta to find work.[601] Additionally, both the mechanization of agriculture during the Great Depression, and a severe drought in 1930 motivated black rural workers to move to the city in search of work.[602]

The movement of rural southern African Americans to southern cities is labeled by historian Bernadette Pruitt as "The Other Great Migration."[603] Scholars typically refer to the Great Migrations as the flow of Southern blacks heading North or West for improved economic opportunities or as an escape from white supremacy in the South.[604] According to her monograph, from shortly before the United States' entry into World War I until 1930, approximately 1.2 million rural farmers moved to urban southern cities.[605] They migrated to the cities believing they could find relief or alternative employment. Historian Jacqueline Jones asserted that in 1920 black women comprised 27 percent of the agricultural workforce—that number fell to 16 percent by 1940.[606] Migrant workers lived either dually in the city and the country and sought temporary employment and relief measures in both rural and urban areas or lived permanently in the city, where they moved to find employment. Many of these jobs,

[600] The Students of the Atlanta School of Social Work, Directed by Sarah Ginsberg, "Negro Families in Need," 1933, NUC, Box 7, AUC.
[601] Kyvig, *Daily Life*, 210.
[602] Ibid., 222.
[603] Ibid., 1.
[604] Bernadette Pruitt, *The Other Great Migration: The Movement of African Americans to Houston, 1900-1941* (College Station: Texas A &M University Press, 2013), 1-5.
[605] Ibid., 5.
[606] Jacqueline Jones, *Labor of Love, Labor of Sorrow,* 168.

already held by black workers, resulted in intra-racial prejudice against these rural migrants since black workers now had to compete with these migrants for employment. The job market conditions during this time were even more difficult for blacks since, when the Depression hit, unemployed whites rushed to fill unskilled positions traditionally reserved for African Americans. These types of jobs included street cleaning, domestic service, and garbage collection.[607] Creating even more difficulties, skilled black workers lost their jobs to white men, who overtook these positions.[608] This situation resulted in competition between black and white men, along with rural migrants. According to historian Jacqueline Jones, black men lost jobs in agriculture, service, and industrial employment because of their position in the racial hierarchy.[609]

As white families could no longer afford the luxury of hired help, black domestic servants' employment suffered during the Depression.[610] Domestics found great difficulty keeping their employment, as many non-working white women chose to attend to household responsibilities to save money. Those domestic servants fortunate enough to keep their jobs received compensation of six dollars per week, especially low pay in the 1930s. Most of these domestic workers were black women. During this time, black women headed nearly one-third of black families, so many of these domestic workers supported their entire family on this meager income.[611]

The Depression worsened the problems of Jim Crow and discrimination in southern states. As a result of this prejudice, African Americans received the least amount of aid per

[607] Sitkoff, *A New Deal for Blacks,* 35; Ferguson, *Black Politics*, 22.
[608] Bayor, *Race and the Shaping of Twentieth Century Atlanta*, 96.
[609] Jacqueline Jones, *Labor of Love, Labor of Sorrow,* 164; Bayor, *Race and the Shaping of Twentieth Century Atlanta,* 99.
[610] Kyvig, *Daily Life,* 221.
[611] Ferguson, *Black Politics,* 23.

capita than any other race in the entire country. Cities across the South, including Atlanta, placed whites at the top of relief rolls, even though African Americans typically needed far more assistance than their white neighbors.[612] Not helping the situation, when blacks received help from relief organizations, they typically received smaller amounts of aid than their white counterparts. In addition, charitable organizations held extreme biases against African Americans, with relief going to whites first. The Family Welfare Society, a public organization founded by the city to direct case work for relief recipients, provided various aid such as food, grocer orders (food vouchers), or other forms of relief; however, the society could not meet the overwhelming demands of the needy regardless of family-size. Atlanta, like other southern cities, faced unprecedented demands that the Family Welfare Society's meager city-funded budget could not keep up with. The Family Welfare Society practically neglected the black community altogether, believing black Atlantans needed less money to survive than needy whites.[613] Subsequently, WURC's mission involved allotting services for West End residents that the Family Welfare Society could not or would not provide. WURC intended to provide the black solution to the Family Welfare Society, by becoming the most substantial relief program for African Americans in the West End neighborhood. WURC, however, became far more inventive than the Family Welfare Society in doling out relief. It sought to create relationships with residents, convince better-off families to provide for the unemployed, and hold fundraisers to garner money to give relief to the needy.

According to Louie Shivery, longtime NU member, secretary and historian, the Depression hit Atlanta hard in 1931, creating "one of the greatest tragedies in human suffering

[612] Ibid., 51.
[613] Ibid.

that had ever hit the city."[614] This crisis led to increased crime, with robberies reaching an all-time high.[615] The Depression also gave rise other types of crime, including an increase in people vandalizing vacant homes, which people desperate for supplies dismantled to use their parts for fuel, a problem so pervasive that the city passed a law to penalize anyone caught removing wood from empty homes.[616] Historian William H. Harris relates that this particular crime became endemic throughout the nation.[617]

The entire city recognized the enormity of the situation, including Mayor James Key, who made a public appeal for assistance because the city could not meet the demands of the Depression.[618] One of the factors contributing to the city's inability to meet the crisis resulted from a $61,500 appropriation it made to hospitals and health services as the result of an influenza outbreak that caused great sickness during this same distressful time.[619] On February 23, 1931, in an article published in the *Atlanta Georgian*, Mayor Key assessed the city's situation and begged private charities and churches to meet the needs of those in distress. Key asked those who could contribute to bring donations to the Better Business Commission, the Family Welfare Society, or the Salvation Army.[620] Although a public appeal, considering the widespread discrimination evident throughout city-wide relief efforts, Key's plea, if addressed, would primarily benefit the white community. Since the city was unprepared to handle the Depression, he advised groups to attack the financial crisis using measures that the NU had employed since its inception. Similar to the NU's survey style, Mayor Key urged people to visit neighbors and make house-to-house

[614] "How the Neighborhood Union Handled the Unemployment Crisis," 1932, Atlanta University Presidential Records- John Hope, Box 135, AUC.
[615] Ibid.
[616] Ibid.
[617] William H. Harris, *The Harder We Run: Black Workers since the Civil War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1982), 103.
[618] "A Letter from Mayor Key," *Atlanta Georgian*, February 23, 1931.
[619] Ibid.
[620] Ibid.

visits to discover the current situation among its inhabitants. It is possible that Mayor Key, a Progressive politician known for his great assistance to the black community and for his close relationship with the NU, may have modeled this advice after the NU's practices when writing his article.[621]

Key's article also detailed the severity of the unemployment crisis. According to Key, 20,000 people of all races were unemployed.[622] Of this number, blacks faced a higher unemployment rate than whites, because of whites taking over their jobs once the Depression hit. By 1933, when the unemployment rate reached its high, 70- 75 percent of African American Atlantans lacked employment.[623] Unfortunately, charitable and private organizations across the United States, already swamped by the overwhelming need for assistance, could not answer Key's pleas to help any further.[624] Thus, while good intentioned, Key's call for help could not improve the economic crisis in his city.

Much like the NU's previous strategy, and following Key's suggestion of neighborhood canvassing, WURC believed in the importance of gathering information so that it could assess the needs of the community. It cooperated with the Atlanta School for Social Work to conduct surveys and gather casework to achieve this end. In the past, the NU conducted these surveys itself, but after the professionalization of social work and the organization's subsequent limitation by the Community Chest, the NU, under the auspices of WURC, used student workers from the ASSW to gather information. Students from the ASSW carried out a tremendous amount of WURC and others' fact-finding missions. WURC assessed the needs of the community and discovered that many private groups were unable to keep up with the demands of

[621] Ibid.
[622] Ibid.
[623] Roger Biles, *The South and the New Deal* (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1994), 19.
[624] Kyvig, *Daily Life,* 223.

its needy community. Many soup kitchens existed throughout Atlanta, but a public city soup kitchen refused to hire African Americans. WURC sought to remedy this situation in November 1931 by donating $100.00 in aid to help find African American workers for the city soup kitchen.[625] The city complied only after WURC agreed to pay the workers' salaries.[626]

These organizations recognized the value of these soup kitchens, not just a means of feeding the hungry, but also as an opportunity to find out more about the needs of the community. At this point, the Atlanta Urban League had run a soup kitchen for months and at the request of the Urban League's Community Kitchen, the Atlanta School of Social Work conducted a survey of soup kitchen patrons and wrote a resulting report entitled, "They Who Are Hungry: (A Study of the Colored Patrons of an Atlanta Soup Kitchen)."[627] The ASSW student surveyors worked with the Urban League to complete the survey and garnered important skills such as learning research methods and receiving real life experience and insight into social problems, which they achieved through working with actual individuals in need. According to the report, the project benefitted the students because they represented, "practical studies for a definite purpose at the request of various social welfare agencies and other public and private agencies of Atlanta, to obtain information on local conditions, which may further the work of these organizations in the community."[628]

The ASSW's study of the local soup kitchen, the Community Kitchen, at the behest of the Urban League, took place in early 1931. Although WURC did not order this survey, it was familiar with the results and used them to further their own studies. As an umbrella organization

[625] Neighborhood Union to Councilman Beck, Chairman, Community Kitchen Committee, November 2, 1931, NUC, Box 3, AUC.; Ferguson, *Black Politics,* 52.
[626] Ferguson, *Black Politics,* 52.
[627] "They Who Are Hungry," 1931 NUC, Box 7, AUC.
[628] Ibid.

of the NU, WURC held the results in its files, demonstrating that although the NU and Urban League had long-standing issues, they still occasionally worked together for the betterment of the community. WURC and other organizations frequently sent their casework and fact-finding missions to one another to further community work and encourage cooperation between groups. WURC and the NU kept several surveys in its files created at the request of other associations and usually tallied by students at the ASSW.

The students surveyed fifty-four men and forty-six women; of the one hundred individuals interviewed, ninety-six were married, thirty-seven lived with their husbands or wives, forty widowed, seventeen separated but not divorced, and two deserted by their spouses. Of the survey participants, eighty-two had children but the majority had only one or two children. This small number of children is explained by the general young age of the adults visiting the soup kitchen with 40 percent under the age of thirty-five and 50 percent under the age of forty. In addition, four single adults and fourteen children who came to the soup kitchen participated in the survey. Native Atlantans comprised only 25 percent of those surveyed, demonstrating that many of the indigent families at the soup kitchen had come to Atlanta from other cities or the countryside in seek of work during the "Other Great Migration." Interestingly, most came before the Depression, however, since eighty-eight participants reported living in Atlanta for at least five years. Further reporting details that participants were fairly literate, since "79 could read and write, 39 had finished elementary school, 10 junior high, 4 high school, and 2 attended college."[629] Additionally, most of the survey respondents reported having a religious affiliation. Thus, soup kitchen patrons represented young, literate, church-going parents down on their luck who had to use the Community Kitchen for assistance. The survey revealed that 80 percent of

[629] Ibid.

participants lacked employment, but its report did not clarify if children counted as unemployed individuals. The survey also found that most of the respondents who reported themselves as unemployed recently lost their jobs, and the vast majority had worked in unskilled employment, consistent with the general demographics of black Atlanta during this time. Seventeen of the 100 interviewed reported they worked or had worked in skilled or semi-skilled trades.[630]

The survey report detailed that one of the participants was an unemployed plasterer who found a job a few days after his initial interview with the ASSW students. He had four children living in a two room house, which he rented for $1.50 a week, for which he was four weeks past due on rent. Luckily for this man, his new job working as a porter paid him $10.00 a week.[631] Besides relating the tale of this plasterer finding work, the report also detailed how many people lived in squalor and horrific living conditions. One woman claimed her home needed such repairs that no landlord could re-rent the home if she moved. She said her furniture propped up her walls and if she moved any, the walls would cave in.[632] In addition to living in homes in disrepair, people also lived in unsanitary conditions. Of the 100 surveyed, seventeen reported having running water in their homes and seventy-three reported having outside toilets, thirty-four of which being privies. These respondents reported that quite often six or seven families shared one outdoor toilet, and in some locations even more families used the same privy. The sharing of outdoor toilets, common to black Atlantans, represented one factor that caused the spread of disease. Most outdoor toilets lacked proper sanitation and occasionally overflowed. Illness and disease also affected these patrons, as fifty-two reported sickness, with only thirty-two having

[630] Bayor, *Race and the Shaping of Twentieth Century Atlanta*, 94; "They Who Are Hungry," 1931 NUC, Box 7, AUC.
[631] "They Who Are Hungry," 1931 NUC, Box 7, AUC.
[632] Ibid.

received medical treatment, mostly with assistance from the Family Welfare Society.[633] Although the survey highlighted the poverty and desperation of the community, it revealed a concern about disease, a constant problem addressed by black elites throughout the early twentieth century. According to the report, the surveyors made no attempt to obtain health services for the sick from this survey, but it is unknown if agencies reading the report reached out to the participants after completion of the survey.

The survey also found that seventy-seven of 104 children lacked an adequate education, with many behind in at least one grade in their schoolwork. For example, the survey found five nine years olds in the first grade, an eleven and twelve year old in the second, and a fifteen year old in the fifth grade.[634] Out of 104 children, forty-four lacked any enrollment in school: nineteen lacked shoes or clothing necessary to attend school, nine were removed from school (for unknown reasons), six worked for wages, eight because "'because there as no one to take care of them'" and three cared for siblings.[635] This data demonstrates how African American children, already stymied by an inadequate educational system, could not afford to attend school because of the Depression. Often forced to work outside the home for paltry wages or to care for younger siblings, children faced great distress during the Great Depression. Unfortunately, unlike the Neighborhood Union's child-centered focus, the surveyors made no attempt to return these children to school, using the report as a fact-finding mission, rather than giving relief.

The ASSW also collected addresses from its survey respondents, which actually revealed that some were probably homeless since, when making follow-up visits, surveyors often found no such addresses existed or found vacant lots or gasoline stations where they were supposed to

[633] Ibid.
[634] Ibid.
[635] Ibid.

find the survey respondents' homes. Many, however, did not know their address, which could explain some of the difficulties encountered in follow-up work.[636] In addition, individuals using soup kitchens may have felt a sense of shame about their inability to provide for their families and did not want visits or intrusions into their home life.[637]

In its report, the ASSW claimed that each family suffered from a number of maladies, including lack of employment, environmental issues, such as inadequate housing, and poor health. The ASSW concluded, "These problems, moreover, are not merely temporary problems, arising out of a period of depression, but continuing problems, underfed, retarded in school. Neglected, have little chance of rising above their childhood environment."[638] Aside from unemployment, their report also referred to issues like unhealthy environmental factors, inadequate, overcrowded housing, lack of educational attainment for children, and poor public health practices, all concerns of the NU for decades. While the survey identified a wealth of problems, much like the muckrakers of the Progressive Era, the ASSW and Urban League did little to find solutions, using the survey as more of a fact-finding mission than an avenue to improve the lives of those interviewed.[639] Much like the NU, the ASSW did make follow-up visits, but did not offer any form of relief. Though the NU and WURC were not directly involved in this survey, it kept the report in their files, the results of which probably helped to shape their social work policies.

The NU also worked with the Atlanta School of Social Work to conduct additional surveys, which WURC, as a branch of the NU, used to influence its charitable activities. One

[636] Ibid.
[637] Sheila M. Rothman, *Living in the Shadow of Death: Tuberculosis and the Social Experiment of Illness in American History* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1994), 213.
[638] "They Who Are Hungry," 1931 NUC, Box 7, AUC.
[639] Ferguson, *Black Politics,* 53.

survey to find out how to best serve the community also gauged survey respondents' abilities to provide aid to their neighbors. The survey specifically sought people who could apply for permanent relief measures (such as finding work) for, and for whom to give temporary relief measures such as food or fuel. This strategy diverged from the Family Welfare Society, who did find some people employment and give out relief, but did not reach out to average citizens in an attempt to find employment for individuals. To accomplish this, the NU worked with the Atlanta School of Social Work to take a meticulous survey of the West End neighborhood. This survey differed from previous canvassing because it asked more personal questions to determine how to help their neighbors because of the Depression, not for eliminating environmental factors or attempting to instill middle-class values in mothers. The surveyors classified community members by levels of need and Walter Chivers, of both the ASSW and the NU, presented the survey's preliminary findings to Lugenia Hope in a letter dated April 23, 1931. This letter provided survey details and related data about surveyed individuals and the groups they fell into: "Not Offering Nor Asking for Aid . . . Will Give Aid . . . Willing But Not Able to Give . . . Families Who Will Aid Dependent Families . . . Families in Need."[640] The NU and WURC believed in the concept of all members of the community sharing responsibility for the entire neighborhood and felt that one should help neighbors in need. This attitude influenced the formation of the survey's classification structure.

Chivers's team asked each household its total weekly income, number of dependents, and how much they spent on rent, food, clothing, and other expenses. Once again, the NU and the ASSW had no issues with asking personal questions. The survey's goal, remained to assess the survey participants' willingness or ability to help his or her neighbor. This demonstrates a

[640] Walter Chivers to Mrs. John Hope, April 23. 1931, NUC, Box 3, AUC.

different strategy than the Urban League used in its survey. While the Urban League's survey gathered statistics only, the NU and WURC sought this study to further their goals of providing for the community and transforming the lives of West End residents devastated by the Depression. So many people participated, despite the personal nature of the questions, because they recognized the need the work the organization was trying to accomplish amidst the financial crisis. As a result, the ASSW received close cooperation from the neighborhood, with the upper-class, however, showing the most resistance in supplying information. Most of the unemployed and poor found their situation so desperate that they welcomed any possible program that might help them during this crisis.

The first group, "Not Offering Nor Asking for Aid," consisted of thirty-eight households with an income ranging from $2.00 to $40.00 per week.[641] Members in this groups ranged from the very poor to the upper-class. These families, the majority of whom had few dependents, could either support themselves or made it by on grocer orders. Grocer orders, similar to vouchers, allowed people to exchange coupons for food at grocery stores. A few on this list, though claiming self-sufficiency, however, clearly needed aid, but may have denied the severity of their situations or had too much pride to ask for help. For example, a Willie Redmon reported that his family, including six dependents, survived on a total weekly income of $2.00 and a $2.50 grocer order, while spending $1.10 per week on insurance. Based on his income and expenditures, it appears he either lied to the ASSW about his financial solvency or did not want assistance.[642]

The second survey group, those who "Will Give Aid," consisted of twenty-one families (incomes unknown). Although the incomes are unknown, one contends these people represented

[641] Ibid.
[642] Ibid.

the middle and upper-classes, as they had available funds or goods to help their neighbors. People categorized into this classification reported their form of employment and the type of aid they could offer their neighbors, which included personal help, food, small amounts of money, and physical labor. This group included the Lawson family, the husband worked as an embalmer and his wife an NU member; they offered to donate a small amount of money to the needy. Mr. Lawson ran a black-owned embalming business for black clientele. His business did not fail during the financial crisis because, people still held funerals and burial services for loved ones, despite financial difficulties. Thus, his income may have been higher than those of his counterparts in this grouping; subsequently, he may have possessed the ability to provide more aid, since his black-owned and operated business still provided essential services.[643]

The third group, "Willing But Not Able to Give," consisted of eight families, whose incomes ranged from $8.00 to $25.00 per week. This included the working and middle-class. For a few respondents, this information went unreported. One assumes that they either did not have steady income or that they chose not to disclose this information. This group's dependents numbered higher than that of the first group. The fourth group, "Families Who Will Aid Dependent Families" had more sound employment, and came from the middle and upper-classes. Of the thirty-eight households in this classification, very few listed their occupation as unemployed, and the employed's occupations included railroad porters (considered a solidly middle-class occupation), nurses, tailors, and cooks.[644] In this group, the types of aid offered included food, clothes, money, and one of the porters offered to give any "kind of relief needed."[645] Much like the Lawson family in the "Will Give Aid" group, people working as

[643] Bayor, *Race and the Shaping of Early Twentieth Century Atlanta,* 95.
[644] Ibid.; William H. Harris, *Keeping the Faith,* 15
[645] Walter Chivers to Mrs. John Hope, April 23. 1931, NUC, Box 3, AUC.

porters did not experience a massive reduction in the need for their services, and therefore maintained their employment and the ability to offer aid in some way to families in need.

The fifth and final group, "Families in Need," consisted of thirty-five families whose income ranged from nothing to $10.00 per week. This group consisted of the working-class, poor, and unemployed. Only one family made $10.00 per week and had ten dependents in the family. Another family made $7.00 per week but had six dependents. The vast majority of people in this classification reported they had no current income. The ASSW asked their needs and what kind of aid they had received to date. Almost every family responded with "none." Two responded that they received aid from the Family Welfare Society, and two responded they received assistance from health clinics.[646] It is unknown whether these families had sought and been denied aid or if they had not sought any aid at all. When asked what they needed, most respondents asked for money or work. When asked what kind of work they could do, many reported common labor work. Others asked for fuel or clothing, general aid, and one family responded with, "everything."[647] This group shows the extreme suffering the West End experienced during this time of despair. This survey demonstrates that the Depression affected the entire community, but by no means uniformly. Although many middle-class residents found themselves ruined by the Great Depression, others, especially those in the black professions or owners of black businesses, weathered the situation better, even though many clients asked for their services on credit. Those destitute and receiving no wages or assistance from local agencies risked losing everything. A great majority already suffered from poverty-like conditions before the crisis and the Depression saw their meager wages turn into no wages at all, with many unable

[646] Ibid.
[647] Ibid.

to afford basic necessities, demonstrating the need for programs like WURC to assist black citizens during the Great Depression.

To finalize the report, the ASSW interviewed more families and offered statistics regarding different groups. They presented their findings in their closing report, entitled, "Some Facts Drawn From 424 Questionnaires of Unemployment," which eliminated the families aiding dependent families group and separated the respondents into four groups: Families in Need (Group A); Families who are willing but not able to give aid to Families in need (Group B); Families neither offering nor taking aid (Group C); and Families who can and will give aid (Group D).[648] The "Families in Need" (Group A), averaged 3.14 dependents and their median income was $4.17 a week. On average, they paid $2.74 per week in rent. Only half of the fifty-nine families admitted to seeking any type of aid in the past; the report labeled them as "poor but proud," insisting they could make it on their own.[649] The NU, shocked by these findings, knew these people desperately needed help. The families could not weather the crisis with their meager incomes, but many had done nothing to try and receive services from any social welfare agency or health center. The NU also wanted to help them because they believed they posed a risk to the community, because of an increased potential for committing crime. Desperation leads to individuals committing crimes for the safety of their families. Accordingly, the report claimed, "Any group of families attempting to subsist on an average income of $4.17 per week is undergoing a severe test of strength and character. Hunger has a tendency to demoralize many erstwhile social beings to the extent that they resort to crime, particularly the theft of food."[650] While claiming a family could not subsist on $4.17 per week, many families, however, would

[648] Some Facts Drawn from 424 Questionnaires of Unemployment," n.d., NUC, Box 7, AUC.
[649] Ibid.
[650] Ibid.

graciously accept $4.17 a week, since many made far less than this amount, which represented only the average wage. The survey field workers came across many families who insisted they could live on a mere $1.50 a week. Again, pride may have played a role in making this claim, since many believed they could address the crisis without assistance even though the majority of these families could not pay their rent. They often abandoned their residences in the middle of the night, moving into vacant homes, or performed other measures to elude their landlords.[651] In addition, although not stated in the report, poverty also leads to disease, since overcrowded, unsanitary conditions that do not adhere to middle-class public health standards result in an unhealthful community.[652]

The final report detailed the respondents in the "Families who are willing but not able to give aid to Families in need" (Group B), whom averaged 2.75 dependents per family and lived on an average income of $12.73 per week. This group represented fifty-one families living on various incomes and also included some families who the NU believed earned enough income to give a small bit to their neighbors and did not do so; the ASSW called these people "too interested in self to loosen up."[653] While receiving less criticism than "Families neither offering nor taking aid," the ASSW recognized that better-off neighbors in this group practiced plain selfishness. Other members barely scraped by, living not much better than the "Families in Need" from the first group. The second group had a smaller average number of dependents which made it easier to feed, house, and clothe their families. Their average weekly rent came to $3.45, seventy-one cents higher than group A, Families in Need. While more families in this group paid their rent, real estate rental lists showed a "considerable number of all marginal

[651] Ibid.
[652] Elisabeth Lasch- Quinn, *Black Neighbors: Race and the Limits of Reform in the American Settlement House Movement, 1890-1945* (Chapel Hill: University of North Caroline Press, 1993), 123.
[653] Some Facts Drawn from 424 Questionnaires of Unemployment," n.d., NUC, Box 7, AUC.

groups are failing to meet their rental obligations."[654] Thus, while some remained up-to-date on their rent and mortgages, many could only provide for their families by shirking their rental obligations.

The third group, "Families neither offering nor taking aid" (Group C), had an average of 2.93 dependents per family and an average weekly income of $16.44. In its survey report, the ASSW lambasted this group, claiming, "This group is characteristic of a blatantly selfish and far too numerous group of society. They number 213 families. The philosophy of this type of people is that they 'don't ask favors, don't give any, and don't expect any.'"[655] The ASSW and the NU's outrage resulted from their disbelief that in situations as dire as the Depression, where people died from starvation and disease, people existed who could afford to give aid to their less fortunate neighbors but would not help. These people did not seek to help their needy neighbors in any way, using their incomes for their own expenses while their neighbors lay in want. WURC, unlike the Family Welfare Society, focused on community building and participation. Without the support of people who could assist during the crisis, WURC faced limited funding because it could not convince this group to take part in the program. With a median income of $16.44, the income of people in this group varied greatly with some as high as $50.00 a week while others made next to nothing. Although many in this group represented the very poor, far more made an income sizable enough to help their neighbors. The key to providing relief from WURC came through donations, and those unwilling to assist but possessed the means to do so, received the most criticism. WURC needed the cooperation of all residents who could afford to help, and the reluctance of this grouping demonstrates either selfishness, or a lack of education about the deleterious effect the Great Depression had on their neighbors. Considering African

[654] Ibid.
[655] Ibid.

Americans lived in the same or directly adjacent neighborhoods, the likelihood that these neighbors lacked awareness about the plight of their neighbors is slight. This group only paid an average $3.88 in rent per month, an amount similar to the average rent of individuals in the A and B categories, demonstrating that they lived in the same neighborhood as others in need and witnessed daily the abject poverty in which their neighbors lived, making it even more unconscionable their unwillingness to help.[656]

The final group, "Families who can and will give aid" (Group D), consisted of 101 families. The canvassers could not conclude any averages from data collected in the survey because the information provided "was so obviously filled with vague estimates, inaccuracies and misleading information, that no effort was made to draw from them the identical type of information presented under A, B, and C." Although the reasons behind these inaccuracies are unclear, it is possible that wealthier families had a tendency to be more secretive than their poorer neighbors. As they suffered less from the Great Depression and did not usually undergo surveys targeting the working-class, they may have found the intrusion unnecessary. The social workers did, however, make some objective conclusions by viewing the general conditions of the neighborhoods, homes, and occupation types of people in this group, which provided hints as to the economic status of these families.[657] Most who claimed they could give aid presented well cared for homes and appeared to live comfortably. They earned enough to exceed the living standards of their neighbors and possessed extra goods or money to give to those in need, which represented a rarity in this crisis; these 101 families knew the acute situation facing their less-advantaged neighbors, as residential segregation required all African Americans live in the same or directly adjacent neighborhoods. The report also implied that those willing to give aid did so,

[656] Ibid.
[657] Ibid.

at least partly, because of the self-serving reason of trying to prevent the alleged crime and vice that they assumed followed unemployment invading their communities. Sounding much like their white counterparts, they feared these unwholesome activities would spread into their part of the neighborhood and impact their lifestyles.[658] Regardless of neighbors' motivation, WURC accepted donations and assistance from any willing community member, and this group of people dramatically helped WURC achieve its mission.

In summary, the first three groups lived in the same locations, while the fourth group lived in more upscale areas of the same neighborhood. The differences between Groups A, B, and C include Group A representing the undoubtedly poverty stricken, with the other two representing the risk of dependency. Ready to meet the crisis, the NU never abandoned its goal of preventative education. In this instance its neighbors became the students. Ultimately, their primary concern not only involved relieving suffering, but "heading off families before they actually get into the 'bread line.'"[659] Again, like the soup kitchen survey, though not directly involved, it is likely WURC read these survey reports, which may have influenced their activities as an organization, as the survey was conducted by the NU, the parent organization of WURC. Prevention of poverty and starvation became the main priority of the NU and the affiliated WURC. The NU, through the ASSW's canvassing, attempted to achieve this priority by educating the community about the plight of its neighbors, believing that bringing attention to their welfare would be the most effective method of alleviating suffering. The NU realized that those already giving aid may have had their standard of living affected, and might resist giving more. Thus, educating them about their neighbors and their financial duress, and spreading

[658] "Petition from the Women's Civic and Social Improvement Committee," August 19, 1913, NUC, Box 2, AUC.
[659] Partial Report of Activities of the West Side Unemployment Committee of the Neighborhood Union, 1931, NUC Box 9, AUC.

information and statistics about their less fortunate neighbors would remind the West Side that they could not sit silently while their neighbors starved.[660] Once again, the NU infused education into their platform in order to enact social change.

The survey, and subsequently the NU and WURC, looked at unemployment from two different positions— people willing to work and people willing to employ workers (to work for low wages, however, as a result of the labor surplus allowing employers to pay workers less).[661] The second, those hiring for low wage work, included financially better-off neighbors who needed help around the house or yard.[662] Some of the more prosperous neighbors provided employment, such as "preparation and care of gardens; painting of homes inside and out; repairing of leaks in roofs; repairing of broken cement walls; remodeling of interior, such as cutting of doors, windows, and flues; cutting of hedges."[663] Curiously, domestic service received no mention in the survey report. Perhaps few blacks needed domestic servants, since many families in this group had a wife or mother who stayed at home and carried out domestic responsibilities.

The main goal of the survey involved convincing the middle and upper-classes to assist the working-class and poor in finding employment. WURC finding employment for individuals in need represents one similarity between WURC and the Family Welfare Society. The modes of operation differed, however. While the Family Welfare Society possessed more resources and power to find permanent employment for families in need, WURC sought to remedy the crisis by contacting financially secure neighbors to employ needier members of the community for house or yard work. The NU, through WURC, decided to implement this strategy by focusing on

[660] Ibid.
[661] Partial Report, January-May 15, 1931, NUC, Box 9, AUC
[662] Some Facts Drawn from 424 Questionnaires of Unemployment," n.d., NUC, Box 7, AUC.
[663] Ibid.

finding solid work instead of part-time work, using the survey to gauge individual families' needs. Even though they believed it easier to find more part-time jobs than full-time work, the NU and WURC believed it more advantageous in the long run to focus on finding full-time work for a smaller number of people, which would provide a more permanent solution. The NU's focus on finding steady work for a select few resulted from the belief that part-time employment would not provide enough income to offset the staggering needs of families.[664] Although finding sufficient full-time employment for less people undoubtedly helped certain families, it left many more without means of employment or secondary employment to keep their families afloat. As primarily middle-class organizations, the NU and WURC did not recognize that many families could survive on meager incomes, and that its poorer neighbors did not require the same standard of living as their wealthier counterparts. The NU, through WURC, achieved its goal of providing great assistance for a number of families in need by seeking to improve the situations of a small group through working to increase wages, which could result in improving the lives of those it believed employable and willing to work. Though they mainly focused on raising wages for dependent families, WURC provided other help to poor families, with aid such as food, fuel, and clothing; these types of assistance, however, represented only temporary relief measures.

WURC did not represent the only organization working to improve the lives of African Americans during the Great Depression. For example, an advertisement in the *Atlanta World,* published on February 17, 1931, offered free dinner at the Bethlehem Church on Hunter Street to the unemployed. The church's Reverend Burress, assisted by local grocers and a Dr. E. G. Bowden, a well-known physician, offered this charity to draw in the needy, who they believed would benefit from a proper religious education through the power of prayer, which would help

[664]Partial Report, January-May 15, 1931, NUC Box 9, AUC; "Some Facts Drawn from 424 Questionnaires of Unemployment," n.d., NUC, Box 7, AUC.

the poor and build confidence in one another.[665] As the custom of the time, the aforementioned physician most likely handed out medical literature or gave free examinations to those in need. Much like the NU, churches and other organizations placed a strong emphasis on public health. The church offered free meals while encouraging people to seek health exams, since the Great Depression vastly contributed to poorer health among the citizenry. In addition, after the Community Chest limited the NU to running the health clinic for preschool-aged children, a shortage of health care pervaded the black community, since the NU, along with the now waning Atlanta Tuberculosis Association, had provided a substantial percentage of available health care for West End residents prior to the Community Chest's order to only work on the pre-school health clinic.[666]

In addition to its work promoting the donations of local churches, WURC also provided detailed casework, documenting a few families for whom it provided employment. This data demonstrates the needs of individuals and families and how WURC assisted during their time of financial duress. Finding work for families in need represented one way in which WURC attempted to resemble the Family Welfare Society, which assisted in finding employment for select individuals. The families in these documents are unnamed and only referred to by generic designations. This documentation details Family A, whom had a history of financial difficulties dating back to 1925 and had actively sought assistance from social service organizations since then. The family included a husband, wife, and seven children. The association helped them by finding the husband temporary work, a job that he quit after three days despite having no

[665] "Bethlehem Church will Give Food to Needy," *Atlanta World*, February, 17, 1931.
[666] *Fifth Annual Report of the Atlanta Anti-Tuberculosis Visiting Nurse Association*, 1913,Atlanta Lung Association Collection (hereafter cited as ALAC), Box 41, Atlanta History Center (hereafter cited as AHC); *Annual Report of Atlanta Anti-Tuberculosis Association: For the Year 1915*, 1915, ALAC, Box 41, AHC; Outline Anti-Tuberculosis Work, NUC, Box 10, AUC.

employment for the previous fourteen months. As a result, the committee ceased to help this family, and the family sent their children to beg in other districts. The committee discouraged neighbors in this district from providing for this family because of their disapproval of the father's actions. WURC did not want children begging in the streets while their able-bodied father refused to work. WURC's strategy met success and the husband returned to work and stayed employed.[667] WURC also wanted to prevent his children from begging and staying on the streets all day, which could lead to maladjustment and a propensity for crime. Thus, the purpose of stopping aid served two purposes: to ensure an employable father supported his family, and to prevent the possibility of increased crime.[668]

WURC's documentation also details the case of Family B, a family of three, who had their furniture repossessed as the result of both the mother and father falling ill, making them unable to work. WURC provided assistance to this family by arranging for them to obtain a donated bed, which was greatly needed since prior to receiving it they had slept on old coats and rags. Every day, the family's little boy wandered into town looking for food. WURC sought to help this family by connecting them with a charitable church that provided them aid. It also arranged for a doctor to attend to the sick parents, and when the doctor demanded payment, the church paid the bill.[669] This demonstrates how WURC used their clout to garner assistance from allies such as churches, who also provided social welfare, and an unwavering support for communal health. WURC, under the auspices of the NU, knew helping the parents become healthy would increase their chance of employment and prevent spreading illness to the child.

[667] Method of the Work of the Unemployment Committee, 1931, NUC, Box 7, NUC.
[668] Some Facts Drawn from 424 Questionnaires of Unemployment," n.d., NUC, Box 7, AUC.
[669] Ibid.

WURC's documentation also details its efforts to help Family C, a mother with eight children. Her husband had died from tuberculosis, and one of her children also suffered from the ailment.[670] Gertrude Tatnall, NU and WURC member, took a special interest in the child, calling him "her baby." This attitude demonstrates NU and WURC members' mindsets, in which they considered themselves parents of all children of the community. As a result, they helped the sick child despite the chance of contagion. Additionally, the mother worked every day outside of her neighborhood, and WURC supplied car fare and eggs to help her.[671] The mother's white, female employer provided charity, stirred by the similar motivation of WURC to bring relief to suffering children. In addition to paying low wages, she gave donated goods she thought would benefit her employee's children, such as cod liver oil. It is possible the white employer offered other charity as well, since during this time, whites employing domestic servants sometimes allowed servants to take home food scraps, old clothing, or extra supplies.[672] WURC provided additional assistance to this family by donating clothes, shoes, and other necessities. This family, with a working mother, possibly benefitted from WURC because of its tendency to take active interest in individuals working or willing to work.[673] The mother fell into the category of "employable," and since she already held employment, but lacked enough income to provide for her large family, WURC supplemented her income.

Finally, another case highlighted by the organization was that of Daniel Oiler, recommended to the organization by W.M. West of the A & P Grocery Store.[674] According to West, he knew Oiler and his family and had helped them several times prior. Oiler needed food

[670] Ibid.
[671] Ibid.
[672] Susan Tucker, *Telling Memories among Southern Women: Domestic Workers and Their Employers in the Segregated South* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1988), 145-183.
[673] Some Facts Drawn from 424 Questionnaires of Unemployment," n.d., NUC, Box 7, AUC.
[674] Note to Mrs. Williams from W.M. West, 1931 NUC, Box 3, AUC.

for his family and stated he would appreciate any consideration. Formerly self-employed as a produce peddler, Oiler's business failed, resulting in eight months of unemployment by the time West referred him to WURC. He had a sick wife and three children, one school age.[675] The fate of the Oiler family remains unknown, but considering he came with a letter of recommendation from a reputable grocer, it is likely he received some assistance from WURC.

Much like documenting specific casework, WURC, in its efforts to provide relief to the community, kept thorough records of its activities. By May of the year of its founding, WURC developed a partial report of the activities of the association. The report documented that the committee's membership consisted of seventy-four volunteers who conducted 1,259 individual meetings and seventy-two group meetings, with 659 total people in attendance.[676] During mass meetings, where WURC solicited the attendance of the entire community to come and discuss the unemployment problem, 3,782 people attended twenty-three total meetings.[677] Additionally, WURC's records show that they claimed to have visited 1,796 houses and that 1,490 families, consisting of 5,150 people, cooperated with the organization. These numbers demonstrate the far-reaching efforts of WURC's programs. The tallies highlight a strong community interest in WURC and finding strategies to improve their situation (and their neighbors' situation) during this crisis, showing how the reputation of the Neighborhood Union, the parent-organization of WURC, harnessed people into the cause and by enacting measures designed to assist the community. As a respected and reputable organization, the NU, now under the auspices of WURC, brought community attention and interest from the neighborhood. Moreover, their documentation shows that it had discovered 649 unemployed adults, along with seventy-five

[675] Ibid.
[676] "Partial Report of the Activities of the West Side Unemployment Committee of the Neighborhood Union," 1931, NUC, Box 9, AUC.
[677] Ibid.

employed children.[678] While WURC greatly objected to child labor, it did not acknowledge that some families needed their children to join the workforce because of the desperation of their financial situations. In some cases, such as the instance of an unnamed family on Pike Street, detailed in WURC's extensive records, a child served as the sole source of income for his or her family.[679] The organization disapproved of child labor, wanting children to receive an education, which it believed would propel them socially, financially, and politically; it did not, however, address the economic consequences of attempting to end child labor in the community.

In total, WURC's records claim that the organization reached 10,850 people, minus 10 percent for duplication (9,775) by May.[680] The NU, always one to tout its accomplishments, may have exaggerated the numbers in its WURC records, but its data demonstrates the tremendous interest of the neighborhood in WURC's efforts. Although the NU, via WURC, never forgot its aim of instilling middle-class values to its neighbors and at times became nosy, the community nonetheless respected the NU and WURC and recognized them as advocates for the West Side neighborhood, working to better the conditions of its residents by providing for families that the Family Welfare Society could not help or helped, but did not supply enough relief.

The West Side Unemployment Relief Committee's meticulous records also include data about the relief provided to the neighborhood. According to WURC, 328 families, consisting of 1,201 individuals, received aid from WURC.[681] While the number remained miniscule compared to the black population, WURC, unlike the NU, focused only on one neighborhood, the West End. It obtained donations of 3,421 pounds of food and distributed 617 pieces of clothing,

[678] Ibid.
[679] "Cases Listed on which Comish Had Worked," *Atlanta World,* April 29, 1931.
[680] "Partial Report of the Activities of the West Side Unemployment Committee of the Neighborhood Union," 1931, NUC, Box 9, AUC.
[681] The NU from the Report of July, 1931, Atlanta University Presidential Records- John Hope, Box 135, AUC.

including thirty-five pairs of shoes, probably given to children so they could attend school. Part of WURC's strength (because of heavy NU participation in WURC), involved its careful attention to detail and the maintenance of its records. Each month, the NU and WURC made a relief report summarizing the aid it provided the community. For July 1931, this report highlighted the dollar value of food supplies given ($500.00) and the dollar amount of household goods distributed ($300.00).[682] While the number of individuals receiving aid was considerable, the amount of food and household goods represented a paltry sum in terms of the needs of the neighborhood. Moreover, the records do not state how many individuals WURC found employment for, only highlighting temporary relief measures, which did not adhere to the policy of preventative education. The vast majority of these supplies came from donations and fundraising conducted by the association, representing a differing strategy than the Family Welfare Society, who accepted donations, but received its primary funding from the city. WURC also received donations of eight tons of fuel that records show they started distributing in January of that year. Though the numbers may have been inflated, the data in these records show that the work of these seventy-four WURC volunteers made a dramatic difference in the lives of many community members.[683]

WURC's extensive documentation also show that they organized their data by district. For example, a Mrs. Holland, manager of Section One, Districts One and Two, had twenty people working below her—twelve volunteers and eight student assistants from Spelman College. According to Holland's report, 390 families in her districts cooperated with their door-to-door visits and they visited 461 families in total, reaching 1,421 people. Data shows that

[682] Ibid.
[683] Ibid.

seventy-one families received aid on some occasion, including 304 individuals.[684] In her district, 178 adults lacked employment, while ten children worked for wages.[685] Of the 171 children of school age in the area, ninety-one did not attend school for varying reasons. The Depression resulted in a dramatic drop in school enrollment, as many children supported their family financially or through familial obligations.

WURC's records by district show that a staggering number of school age children lacked enrollment in the public school system. In Section One, District Four, WURC counted 163 children, with ninety-two out of school. In Section Two, District One, every single child (thirty-seven) accounted for did not attend school. The high number of children not in school resulted from a number of factors. Children could not attend school if they had not received the proper vaccinations or did not have proper shoes and clothes. Many had familial obligations or worked to supplement their family's income. Once again, the NU's (and thus, WURC's) belief that obtaining an education represented the most effective method for preventing social maladies and health problems, resulting in WURC's plans to help these children. This data helped result in the WURC's upcoming efforts to make it a priority to get children back in school and assist those still enrolled.[686]

WURC's focus on children in school is further evidenced by its efforts to make school lunches for children in need, demonstrating a more creative approach for relief than the Family Welfare Society.[687] It documented the child's name, parent or guardian, address, and for some, comments about their home life in their records. Cooperating schools benefited by receiving free

[684] Ibid.
[685] Ibid.
[686] Mass letter from the Shoes Furnishing Club, 1931, NUC, Box 3, AUC; 1931 Effort to Relieve Needy Children by Furnishing Lunches, 1931, NUC, Box 6, AUC.
[687] 1931 Effort to Relieve Needy Children by Furnishing Lunches, 1931, NUC, Box 6, AUC.

lunch programs run by WURC. The organization provided these programs because it believed children could not properly learn with empty stomachs and felt uplifting the race through making better futures for children required them to have a solid education and full bellies. The majority of children needed donated clothing, which WURC members helped to obtain, but many sadder stories emerged from this roster of children. Many had lost their parents, with others having unemployed or barely working parents; the majority of these children's families had no source of income, while some had sick parents, often bed-ridden or in the hospital.[688] Thus, the success of the free lunch campaign resulted in additional findings about the living situations of children. The roster demonstrates the hardships young children endured during the Depression. The crisis not only affected the employment and standard of living of families, it physically and emotionally affected entire families.[689]

After recording these horrific findings, WURC decided to raise money for the committee in a way that would offer fun for the community, especially children. WURC wanted to raise money for the neighborhood, while simultaneously giving fun and cheer to their downtrodden neighbors. On October fifteenth, sixteenth, and seventeenth of 1931, WURC held a carnival to raise funds for the organization (the NU had regularly held carnivals since 1912).[690] This one held special purpose— to provide direct relief to the black community, instead of a fundraising measure in which funds went directly to the association. All workers volunteered for the event. Although WURC wanted to provide the black solution to the Family Welfare Society, here their strategies merged. The Family Welfare Society received most of its funding by the city, while WURC heavily relied on donations and fundraising activities. WURC used creative ways, such

[688] Ibid.
[689] Ibid.
[690] Report of the Neighborhood Union, 1912, NUC, Box 2, AUC

as implementing a community fundraiser to enhance their money-making efforts. In a publicity statement sent to local presses, Louie Shivery outlined the carnival and its purpose. According to Shivery, the carnival would include activities both for educational and entertainment purposes, and it aimed to raise funds to alleviate the suffering of children and their families.[691] Shivery used fear as a strategy to incite others into supporting the carnival. She claimed, "A great amount of sickness and other ills attendant in times such as we have with us today will breed crime, vice, despair in the hearts and minds of those who suffer unless in some manner of aid of the right sort is provided."[692] To draw attention to the cause, Shivery employed many of the same scare tactics about African Americans (fear of sickness, crime, and vice) that the mainstream press used to denigrate African Americans.[693] The white community depicted African Americans as criminals, disease-spreaders, and lacking morality. By playing to white stereotypes, her audience centered on the white community, hoping they would provide support in order to prevent problems before they occurred. While well meaning, Shivery's statement reinforced whites' long-held stereotypes about the black community.[694]

Shivery and other WURC members continued their efforts to throw the fundraising carnival by calling upon local businesses and individuals for donations. They reminded people that many neighbors suffered because of their unwillingness to share incomes or standards of living with others. Many local businesses volunteered, including the Atlanta Life Insurance Company, the most prominent African American insurance company in Atlanta, which donated

[691] The Unemployment Committee of the Neighborhood Union Sponsors a Carnival October 15-16-17," NUC, Box 8, AUC.
[692] Ibid.
[693] Tera W. Hunter, *To 'Joy My Freedom: Southern Black Women's Lives and Labors after the Civil War* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1997), 188.
[694] Evelyn Brooks Higginbotham, *Righteous Discontent: The Women's Movement in the Black Baptist Church, 1880-1920* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1993), 194-5.

the printing of 3,000 carnival tickets to the event.[695] The Pilgrim Life Insurance Company also donated 3,000 tickets for a Baby Contest and Lilliputian Parade.[696] Carrie Taylor, a representative of the Pilgrim Life Insurance Company, and longtime member of the "Colored" branch of the Atlanta Tuberculosis Association, may have used her connections to obtain the ticket donations.[697]

Unique to this carnival, WURC solicited donations from black and white businesses. This reflects a similar strategy used by the Family Welfare Society, as they too reached out to businesses for donations. Lugenia Hope, for the NU/WURC, sent a standard letter to local businesses, regardless of the race of ownership, asking for assistance. The letter stated, "The NU is a social service organization conducted by Negro women in the city of Atlanta for more than a quarter of a century under the motto 'Love thy neighbor as thy self.' It has sought to cooperate in every crisis affecting community life in Atlanta by assisting in the phase most closely related to Negro welfare."[698] Hope probably personally sent these letters based on her standing in the community. The letter continued with a reminder to businesses about the unemployment crisis and that WURC would hold a street carnival near Booker T. Washington High School, from which all proceeds would aid families in the coming winter. Hope concluded by asking for businesses to donate items to the cause.[699] Among others, the Keely Company, S.W. and J.M. High Co., and local grocers, received this letter.

[695] Bayor, *Race and the Shaping of Twentieth Century Atlanta*, 94.
[696] The Unemployment Committee of the Neighborhood Union Sponsors a Carnival October 15-16-17," NUC, Box 8, AUC.
[697] Atlanta Tuberculosis Association Colored Branch, Attendance for 1928, ALAC, Box 21, AHC.
[698] Letter from WURC Sent to Local Businesses, October 5, 1931, NUC, Box 3, AUC.
[699] Ibid.

Differing from the standard letter sent to businesses, a letter addressed to Rogers Incorporated included a list of specific food items as suggested donations.[700] The nature of Rogers Incorporated's business is unknown, but considering the list of requested supplies exclusively consisted of food, one can conclude that this company likely supplied groceries. The requested items included canned goods, boxed materials, and meats. Sent directly to the company from a Mrs. McGhee, the letter claimed that during the last winter the organization assisted three hundred needy families, but explained that many of the people who donated last year now faced desperate situations themselves, meaning WURC would likely receive less donations in the coming winter.[701] The letter stated that the committee appreciated any donations from Rogers Incorporated and would use them wisely.

Many agencies, both black and white, volunteered or contributed to help run the carnival. For example, Mayor James Key and Superintendent Willis A. Sutton gave the NU permission to use Booker T. Washington High School and the surrounding streets as the carnival venue. In an undated letter sent to Mayor James L. Key, the NU requested the approval of street closures, specifically C St., Beckwith St., and Washington Place Streets, which all surrounded Booker T. Washington High School.[702] The NU probably sent this petition instead of WURC, because of the NU's reputation throughout Atlanta, and having previously worked with the mayor and Sutton, it believed the appeal would pass if the NU requested it. In response, the City Council and mayor approved the action on October 3, 1931, stating that since the organization had the consent of the people living on the streets mentioned, the NU could close the streets each night

[700] Letter from Mrs. McGhee to the Advertising Manager of Rogers Incorporated, October 3, 1931, NUC, Box 9, AUC.
[701] Ibid.
[702] Mrs. John Hope, *Letter to Mayor James L. Key*, Atlanta City Council Records, Vol. 32 sec. 21/754 [1931].

beginning at 6:00 PM.[703] In addition, Mayor Key provided police protection for the carnival, to maintain order and attend to any rowdy groups.[704] The NU's decades of requesting police protection for their fundraising activities and for standard patrolling previously fell on deaf ears, as standard patrolling in black neighborhoods did not represent a key concern for the police department. For this event, however, Mayor Key, on good terms with the NU (and subsequently WURC), broke with tradition and provided officers to maintain safety at the carnival.

The Georgia Railway and Power Company also provided reduced-cost lighting and put a permanent lighting fixture at the corner of C and Beckwith Streets, installing it for the carnival. Additional donations for the event came from produce firms, Foremost Ice Cream, King Hardware Company, Campbell Coal Company, grocers, and meat merchants.[705] Both the Campbell Coal Company and the Randall Coal Company donated one ton of coal each.[706] It is unknown whether these businesses had black or white ownership. Various companies donated items for contest prizes—The Beck and Gregg Hardware Co. donated a toaster, the Southern Electric Company, a percolator, and the Puritan Chemical Co. gave mops.[707]

In addition to businesses helping, members of the community came together to make the carnival a success. Individuals and families not affiliated with the NU or WURC who lived near the event venue made their homes and yards available for use as attraction sites. At least two NU members, a Mrs. Hubert and a Mrs. Storrs, also donated space for the carnival. Several sororities from local black universities also assisted.[708] Thus, while headed by the West Side

[703] *Resolution: Permitting the NU to close one block of C St., Washington Pl. and Beckwith St. for Street Carnival on nights of October 15th, 16th, and 17th*, Atlanta City Council Records, Vol. 32, sec 32/479 [1931].
[704] Untitled, November, 1931, NUC, Box 9, AUC.
[705] Ibid.
[706] Thank you letters to various businesses, December 17, 1931, NUC, Box 3, AUC.
[707] Ibid.
[708] Ibid.

Unemployment Relief Committee, the contribution of both neighbors, businesses, and students to the success of the carnival demonstrates that the event represented a true community effort to provide for those in need. WURC used the standing of the NU in the community, its power of organizing events, and its dedication to this community event to benefit its neighbors.

In addition to the carnival's use as a fundraiser, WURC used the carnival as another opportunity to bring literacy and religious education to the community. Literacy and religion remained the central tenets of black freedom since emancipation, and WURC incorporated both in a fun way to attract children.[709] The Neighborhood Union and WURC supported education in every facet of their programs and were religious people. To this end, the organization included a Lilliputian parade, named after the Lilliputs of Jonathan Swift's book, *Gulliver's Travels*, to promote literacy in children and a "Children of Israel Crossing the Red Sea," for religious instruction and entertainment[710] Continuing the organization's attempts to educate the community, much like previous carnivals, the event included depictions of locales from around the world, though considering the time period, these depictions were shaded by stereotypes of the day. Although likely rife with inaccuracies, the NU never abandoned its commitment to education. Some of these depictions included one's ability to visit the Eskimos in their igloo, an "Oriental" Palace, a Japanese Pagoda, an "International House," and a meeting with an "Indian Man."[711] Though representatives of stereotypes, the intent of these attractions to educate and bring culture to the community demonstrated the NU's (and now WURC's) continued commitment to education. Through these depictions, it sought to teach children (and adults) about other cultures and how other ethnic groups differed from their own.

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[709] Eric Foner, *A Short History of Reconstruction* (New York: Harper & Row, 1990), 40-43.
[710] Advertisement "Benefit Carnival under Auspices of Westside Committee of Neighborhood Union," NUC, Box 9, AUC.
[711] Ibid.

Additionally, WURC infused education through a "House of Negro Art and Literature" and a stunt demonstration conducted by the Boy Scouts.[712] The "House of Negro Art and Literature" attraction depicted the achievements of African Americans from past to present. WURC wanted to instill the black community with racial pride; highlighting these accomplishments may have brought hope to the thousands of people in despair because of the Depression by demonstrating that they too could lift themselves up and out of their current situations. The Boy Scouts' demonstration shows that the organization actively included children in the running of the carnival.[713] Thus, WURC and the NU, while garnering funds for their programs, slipped education and the active participation of children into the carnival, two of their central goals since the creation of the NU.

WURC sold tickets for a mere ten cents, in an attempt to make the carnival affordable for everyone. For example, in 1916, the NU showed the film *Evangeline,* and sold tickets for twenty-five cents.[714] Fifteen years later, carnival tickets cost far less than ticket prices for the movie and the community rallied to support the carnival, since they knew the proceeds directly benefitted the West End community.[715] While the NU holding carnivals as fundraisers did not represent a new strategy, this carnival held special meaning to WURC and NU members as all money raised served to directly assist neighbors in need. The success of the carnival demonstrates just how special it was—it had more volunteers and more attractions than ever before. The entire community rallied to ensure the success of the event; they secured location

[712] Ibid.
[713] Since the Boy Scouts' (an organization founded in 1910) local troop often lacked adequate funding for extra-curricular activities, they may have held this demonstration not just to educate the community about African American achievements, but also as a recruitment method. The Girl Scouts' (an organization founded in 1912) neighborhood troop, however, did not make a demonstration at the carnival. One wonders if this is because the carnival already featured many domestic activities, such as an apron bazaar.
[714] Ticket Stub: *Evangeline*, NUC, Box 9, AUC.
[715] Advertisement "Benefit Carnival under Auspices of Westside Committee of Neighborhood Union," NUC, Box 9, AUC.

and police protection, received donations from businesses, and volunteers from residents to use their land for attraction venues. The carnival successfully accomplished community building, a primary focus of the NU through bringing the West End together to work toward the common goal of making the carnival a success and raising funds for neighbors in need. Altogether, WURC raised over $500.00, while only making $25.00 in expenditures, netting a total of $475.00 in profits as aid for the community during the upcoming winter.[716] Though an overwhelming success, the carnival alone could not raise enough funds to address the true needs of the West Side Community.

The NU and WURC cooperated with other social welfare program and events, such as promoting many local church events. Much like Bethlehem Church, which provided free meals to the needy, one advertisement for St. Matthias' Training School and Community Service Work, headed by Reverend Wilbur Q. Rogers, stated the church would offer 1,000 free Thanksgiving dinners for children, widows, and dependents, individuals hit hardest by the crisis. Much like the NU and WURC, the Training School infused community service work and education into its platform. While people received a free meal, the advertisement also touted various community service activities the organization ran, including health services such as lessons and help with sanitation, a physician and nurse on hand to provide free medical examinations, and lectures on home care and how to check for communicable diseases.[717] Public health represented a common concern among the middle-class, and much like Bethlehem Church, the Training School sought to provide health exams and health education to the needy. Similar to the NU and the Atlanta Tuberculosis Association, (which had lost much of their status during the late 1920s), the

[716] Untitled, November, 1931, NUC, Box 9, AUC. Jacqueline Rouse claimed that the carnival raised $600.00. Rouse, *Lugenia Burns Hope* 87.
[717] Community, Free 1000 Thanksgiving Dinners, November 1931, NUC, Box 8, AUC.

organizations and Bethlehem Church concerned themselves with curbing the spread of disease, and as a result, sought to educate the public about personal and communal health measures. The back of the advertisement included several ads for local businesses including, grocery stores, dry cleaners, ice cream parlors, and shoe-makers, demonstrating the support from black-owned businesses.[718] These self-employed businesses could afford to donate to the needy and paid for advertisement space on the flyer. Although neither WURC nor the NU's name is found on the flyer, the top left corner included an advertisement for dental services by Dr. Geo R. Shivery, dentist and former husband of NU historian Louie Shivery.[719] Although now divorced, Louie Shivery likely imparted her former husband about the need for social services during their marriage.

As winter approached, WURC recognized that many families lacked the supplies they needed to prepare for the upcoming cold season and sought to help this situation. In particular, many children lacked shoes, which left them unable to attend school. This demonstrates another strategy that differed from the Family Welfare Society, which provided permanent and temporary relief measures to individuals and families. No evidence is provided that hints that the Family Welfare Society sought to return children to school by making the necessary provisions, such as obtaining proper clothing and shoes. WURC, the NU, the Attendance Officer of Local Schools, and the Parent Teachers Association worked together to set up a committee to assist children in returning to school, which they named "The Shoes Furnishing Club."[720] Headed by The Parent-Teachers' Council of Colored Schools, the organizations started a drive to either buy or receive donations for 5,000 pairs of shoes to be given to needy children. They solicited

[718] Ibid.
[719] Ibid.
[720] Mass letter from the Shoes Furnishing Club, 1931, NUC, Box 3, AUC.

donations from the community of ten cents per person in their mass letters to all community residents. While it is unknown how many shoes this program actually collected, a District Report from WURC showed that from July 1, 1931, to the end of the year, children received 427 pairs of shoes from the program, a number far below the initial goal.[721] This type of charity shows how members of these organizations extended their roles as caregivers and mothers beyond their own families to all the children of the community. The shoe drive program, aimed at ensuring children could attend school to receive education and subsequently grow up as responsible citizens, fell short of meeting its goal, but these women did enable at least 427 children to return to school, a worthy accomplishment deserving of recognition.

At the end of 1931, WURC's District Report provided a tabulation of relief given since July 1, 1931 and a Clinic Report for the NU Pre-School Age Clinic. According to the report, by this point, WURC helped 5,000 people in total. It provided aid to 1,684 families, including 4,042 individuals, donated 1,276 garments and 427 pairs of shoes, and distributed various household goods.[722] Again, WURC, while well-meaning, only documented temporary relief measures in its report. Permanent relief such as finding employment for individuals received no mention. The pre-school health clinic had 684 children seen by doctors or nurses during this period. Moreover, these children received additional donations from the NU—178 received milk, 432 cod liver oil, and fourteen received coal for the coming winter.[723] Providing milk for children always remained a part of the clinic, as children needed protein and vitamins and babies could exclusively drink milk for their diet. The Neighborhood Clinic's activities mirrored the Family Welfare Society, which assisted the ill in obtaining health services. The striking increase in Neighborhood Clinic

[721] District Report since July 1, 1931, Not Dated (n.d.), NUC, Box 9, AUC.
[722] Ibid.
[723] Ibid.

recipients means that black public health had severely deteriorated, and desperate parents sought care for their children in substantial numbers as a result of the Great Depression. Once again, it is possible that WURC may have exaggerated its numbers for their district report, but the NU may not have for the pre-school clinics, as parents still took their children to the clinic in high numbers. Once wildly popular in its prime, the Neighborhood Clinic represented just one of a few locations where African Americans could receive medical treatment. Before the Community Chest restricted the NU's activities in 1927 to running a health clinic for pre-school children only, people of all ages flocked to the clinic to receive medical attention, dental work, and referrals to other organizations, such as the Atlanta Tuberculosis Association. At times Grady Hospital and Battle Hill Sanatorium also worked in conjunction with the NU, although they provided unequal segregated services, limiting their role in public health, as many African Americans refused to attend unequal segregated wards for blacks.

WURC's July 1, 1931 through January 1932 district report also highlighted the fundraising efforts it made in the preceding six months. No evidence is provided that the Family Welfare Society engaged in fundraising activities, representing a diverging strategy from WURC. First, it mentioned the carnival, which 5,000 people attended, a staggering number for the West End, demonstrating its popularity. It also offered a movie fundraiser, the proceeds from which funded the purchase of fourteen tons of coal for the needy; moreover the report discussed two parties held by younger members of the NU that raised $50.00. It also provided a musical event hosted by David T. Howard Junior High School, which raised $100.00 for WURC; additionally, the principal and faculty members also donated $100.00.[724] The report also discussed a donation of thirteen dollars from the Public School Teachers' Association. These

[724] District Report since July 1, 1931, N.D., NUC, Box 9, AUC; Ferguson, *Black Politics*, 52.

additional donations validate that the community stood by and supported WURC in their measures, demonstrating how many did not hold official membership, but supported the organization's efforts. Additional donations discussed in the report include the women of the Westside Unemployment Relief Committee making clothing for 400 children and Sears, Roebuck, and Company, headquartered in Chicago, selling clothing at greatly reduced costs to the needy, demonstrating WURC and the NU's influence and ability to reach an audience outside the city of Atlanta.[725] Its success in partnering with this national corporation resulted in WURC supplying over $300.00 in clothing for needy children in their community, allowing those unable to attend school because of inadequate clothing.

The Westside Unemployment Committee abruptly halted its work at the beginning of 1932 and the NU returned to operating a pre-school age clinic only, after the Community Chest chastised the Neighborhood Union. According to an annual report, "all work is discontinued except the regular Pre-school Age Health Clinic, which provides a wider program…in addition to the following: (1) Educational, (2) Clinic, (3) Garden, (4) Sanitation, (5) Ways and Means, (6) Finance, Committees."[726] The NU suspended its efforts under the WURC name for two reasons—because it interfered with the Community Chest's ruling of running a pre-school clinic only and because Rhoda Kaufman of the Community Chest "complained that the NU's work overlapped with the work of other agencies," harkening back to complaints made by the Atlanta Urban League.[727] She also objected to the NU's lack of trained social work.[728] As a result, the

[725] District Report since July 1, 1931, N.D., NUC, Box 9, AUC.
[726] The West Side Unemployment Relief Committee Issues Its Annual Report: February 1, 1931- March 1, 1932, 1932, NUC, Box 9, AUC.
[727] Sarah Mercer Judson, "Building the New South City: African-American and White Clubwomen in Atlanta, 1895-1930," (PhD diss. New York University 1997), 392.
[728] Lugenia Hope had worked at Hull House in Chicago; and many WURC volunteers came from the Atlanta School of Social Work. Ferguson, *Black Politics*, 19.

NU disbanded WURC and returned to running the pre-school age health clinic only, but as demonstrated above by the committees, it sought to expand its influence as much as possible. As a result of WURC activities, the NU did not receive expulsion from the Community Chest by claiming that WURC represented a separate organization altogether, which included NU women who happened to also hold membership.

The NU's following Annual Report attempted to further disassociate the organization from the West Side Unemployment Relief Committee and notes that WURC's community work became officially withdrawn in March 1932.[729] The report's introductory statement professed this notion, "The Neighborhood Union, which was organized in 1908 as a real community organization, has the last five years concentrated only on the health program as it pertains to the pre-school child."[730] Though limited to running just this health program, the NU did seek during this time to expand its influence while still obeying the Community Chest's mandate. Some of these efforts included offering Red Cross certification programs in home hygiene (which they justified as being directly linked to the promotion of childhood health).[731] Eighty people enrolled in the Red Cross programs between 1931 and 1932. Additionally, it held pre-school age mothers clubs. Obeying the Community Chest's commands, members of the ASSW provided the follow-up work for the clinic to ensure patients adhered to medical advice. Infusing education through the care of the child, the NU believed, "that the best way to aid needy families is to aid them in their homes and to keep in close enough touch to know and to help to keep the families together normally."[732] During 1932, the health clinic saw 763 children, totaling 1,800 visits and including

[729] The West Side Unemployment Relief Committee Issues Its Annual Report: February 1, 1931- March 1, 1932, 1932, NUC, Box 9, AUC; Sarah Mercer Judson, "Building the New South City," 392.
[730] Louie Shivery, "Neighborhood Union Report for 1932," 1932, NUC, Box 6, AUC.
[731] Lasch- Quinn, *Black Neighbors,* 123.
[732] L.D. Shivery, Neighborhood Union Report for 1932, 1932, NUC, Box 6, AUC, 2.

2,376 follow-up visits.[733] This high number demonstrates the standing of the NU in the community and the value of the Neighborhood Clinic to the black community. The implementation of mothers' clubs, education courses about caring for children and the sick, and providing Red Cross certifications all represented ways the NU educated mothers about how best to care for their children and to provide a better home life for future citizens. Since many attendees had pre-school age children, the programs fell within the NU's purview, parameters set by the Community Chest. The NU acknowledged that the health of children broke down because of the unemployment crisis and sought to remedy the situation. The clinic also inoculated and vaccinated children against contagious diseases to prevent an epidemic.[734] Again, the NU used intelligent ways to assist other members of the community to achieve its goal of uplifting the black community. The NU understood the need for these services, since if an epidemic broke out among young children, it would affect their families, neighbors, and the entire community. While confined to one type of work, the NU sent health literature about the benefits of "vaccinations, inoculation, rest, sunshine, correct posture, and cleanliness," to families as well, hoping to spread education about the need for these services to the whole community.[735] Thus, the NU worked within the guidelines set by the Community Chest, but expanded their work to include as many beneficial and healthful activities as possible.

The West Side Unemployment Relief Committee left a legacy of ordinary people working to aid the community by educating its neighbors about the plights of others and raising funds to help in need. Accordingly, "Through these efforts, every person in the community was

[733] The West Side Unemployment Relief Committee Issues Its Annual Report: February 1, 1931- March 1, 1932, 1932, NUC, Box 9, AUC.
[734] L.D. Shivery, A Brief Summary if the High points of the Unemployment Committee 1932 (to Chest Press), 1932, NUC, Box 6, AUC, 2.
[735] Ibid.

interested and willing to cooperate in whatever way he could. The churches, grocery stores, clubs, and all, were willing to lend a hand. It was truly a community project, families giving what they could afford, a cup of sugar, cup of corn meal, something green, canned goods."[736] While WURC lacked the resources to make a substantial difference in the lives of West End residents, the NU's initial goal, expressed at the very first meeting in 1908, community building, was achieved through the massive participation of neighbors to improve the situation of the neighborhood and assist needy residents.

WURC represented the last foray of the Neighborhood Union, and although its role in the neighborhood diminished, it remained active for several more decades. WURC sought to mimic some aspects of the Family Welfare Society, by focusing on individuals and families who did not receive adequate relief from the association, while creating more inventive ways to help neighbors in need. WURC provided both permanent relief measures for some neighbors, such as employment, through educating better off neighbors about the plight of the less fortunate, and temporary relief measures for a wider group, such as providing food, fuel, and cloth. Preventative education retained its place as a goal, seeking to keep some families from needing direct relief, and promoting activities at both churches and the Neighborhood Clinic to improve public health. Although a child-centered focused is less prevalent in WURC's efforts, the NU and WURC focused on keeping children in school. While it fell short in effectively addressing the unemployment crisis in the West Side during the 1930s, WURC still achieved much, as evidenced by its care for families, attempts to raise peoples' spirits, and its accomplishment in finding some people work.[737] The NU remained a part of the West Side of Atlanta for over fifty

[736] L.D. Shivery, Neighborhood Union Report for 1932, 1932 NUC, Box 6, AUC.
[737] Ibid.

years, but its influence became restrained prior to the creation of WURC, during the 1920s, demonstrating the weaknesses of the NU as a social uplift organization for black Atlantans.

Conclusion

The Neighborhood Union (NU) left not only a permanent mark on the community in which its leaders resided, it also directly benefited the neighborhood children it sought to help; many of these children grew up to become social workers and pillars of their communities themselves, fulfilling the Neighborhood Union's mission of training activists for the next generation. During the life of the organization, the Neighborhood Union never abandoned its goal of creating responsible and educated future adults who would possess the abilities needed to combat white supremacy and racial inequalities. Particularly, the NU accomplished much of this goal by training the next generation of social workers. Some of the children receiving NU services who grew up to become influential social workers include: James Hubert, former secretary of the New York City Urban League; Ira Reid, member of the National Urban League; Ethel McGhee, Dean of Women at Spelman College; and B.F Hubert, President of Georgia State College.[738] In addition, several other NU children grew up to work in the field of social work, though their specific organizational affiliations are unknown. NU children who grew up to work in the social work field include: Anna Ward Forrester, social worker in New York; Sylvester Williams of Cleveland Ohio; Carrie Dukes Rose of Rochester, New York; Kate Kelley Thurman of Atlanta; and Neighborhood Union Board member, Walter Chivers.[739] According to a 1932 report of the Emergency Committee of the Neighborhood Union, "Community progress was a major part of the program because children are specifically affected, and the development of children is our objective."[740] These children developed along the lines envisioned by the

[738] L.D. Shivery, "Report of the Emergency Committee," 1932, Neighborhood Union Collection (hereafter cited as NUC), Box 6, Atlanta University Center (hereafter cited as AUC).
[739] Ibid.
[740] Ibid.

association, holding privilege and distinction in their own communities, as community members recognized and respected the value of black social workers. The Neighborhood Union sought, from its inception, to instill middle-class virtues and teach children the value of education. While not every child affected by NU programs grew up to become race leaders, the impact the Neighborhood Union had on many children led them to lives in which they continued to promote the NU's message of community building and addressing racial inequities.

The Neighborhood Union accomplished much over its multi-decade existence, with the pinnacle of its sway and power over the community happening during its first twenty-five years of existence. During its later years, the NU's West Side Unemployment Relief Committee (WURC) did its best in the short time of its operation to help people devastated by the Great Depression, but it did not possess the ability or resources to meet the true demands of the suffering community it tried to help. Far too many families needed assistance, and much of the West Side Unemployment Relief Committee's efforts focused on the fundraising itself rather than the actual doling out of tangible relief. [741] The product of WURC's efforts did not meet the vision the NU had for it when it decided to form the committee. The need was too great, and only with city-funding could WURC have truly made a wide-reaching impact. While the dissolution of WURC represented the Neighborhood Union's final stab at bringing about substantial community improvement, this examination contends that the Neighborhood Union, still at the actual height of their influence and power, in the late 1920s, abruptly began its downfall as evidenced by organization's financial problems that cropped up during the time period, financial constraints of the Atlanta Tuberculosis Association (ATA), an organization the Neighborhood Union worked with closely for decades, and the 1927 edict from the Community

[741] Karen Ferguson, *Black Politics in New Deal Atlanta* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002), 53.

Chest instructing the NU to limit their operations to running a pre-school age clinic only. All of these issues combined to start the Neighborhood Union's eventual fall from power in the community.

The NU's work showed resulted in many gains for African American Atlantans, but because of the 1920s' financial difficulties from which the Neighborhood Union suffered, the organization realized it needed to employ additional tactics to raise awareness for its program. Much like the preceding year, during which the NU asked for city-funding, it sent a letter requesting $500.00 from Mayor Sims to fund its annual health campaign in 1926. According to a draft of the letter, "Once again Atlanta is to be represented in a movement which we feel should have the support of all citizens who are interested in the health and general appearance of the city. I refer to the health and clean-up campaign . . . which is now conducted annually in the spring throughout the United States, and which, with your cooperation last year, was a creditable success in Atlanta under the auspices of the Neighborhood Union."[742] The letter continued, attributing much of the 1925 campaign's success to a $300.00 donation made by Mayor Sims. The NU increased its funding request to $500.00, citing additional expenses regarding literature, fuel, lighting, and rental costs for their meetings. The organization also needed additional money to buy prizes for school children, whom the NU considered gateways to improving community health, citing that prizes "should prove stimulating in getting a general and effective cooperation on the part of the children that touch every zone of our population."[743]

The reputation of the Neighborhood Union's good works during this time was well-known, as evidenced by Mayor Walter Sims, who had known affiliations with the Ku Klux Klan, donating money to the NU in 1925 for the annual health campaign; his donation demonstrates

[742] "Request of Mayor Sims for $500.00 for Health Campaign 1926," NUC, Box 2, AUC.
[743] Ibid.

how the Neighborhood Union's good reputation had spread throughout Atlanta to such an extent that even a white supremacist mayor took steps to provide for its public health program.[744] Although his motives are unknown, Mayor Sims knew that improving the public health of the black community would prevent the spread of communicable diseases into white neighborhoods. This reason may, and even likely, explain why Sims, as a known white supremacist, would make a donation to the Neighborhood. The NU concluded it 1926 funding request letter by stating, "We confidently expect you to grant our request."[745] By this time, the NU possessed a sense of entitlement and became more brave and demanding in its lobbying for city services, as evidenced by the NU's statement essentially ordering the mayor to grant its funding request. The word "expect" demonstrates a belief that the city should help. The Neighborhood Union's reputation had spread across Atlanta, and the mayor knew the value of having allies, especially now that black women possessed the power to vote in local elections. Despite the mayor having this knowledge, records do not reveal if he granted the Neighborhood Union's funding request.

Mirroring the Neighborhood Union's financial difficulties, the Atlanta Tuberculosis Association faced financial and organizational difficulties in the 1920s as well. The Neighborhood Union and the Atlanta Tuberculosis Association worked together for decades to improve the public health of Atlanta, even after the NU's power began to diminish in the late 1920s and early 1930s, the organizations remained aligned for several more years. Thus, the waning influence of the ATA, including its "Colored" Branch, resulted in a loss of NU power, due to heavy NU participation, and thus the ATA's difficulties weakened the alliance's ability to improve access to health care through black communities. Together, they accomplished much for the African American community during their multi-decade alliance, but ATA membership

[744] Kenneth T. Jackson, *The Ku Klux Klan in the City, 1915-1930* (Chicago: Elephant Paperbacks, 1992), 38.
[745] "Request of Mayor Sims for $500.00 for Health Campaign 1926," NUC, Box 2, AUC.

waned in the late 1920s, limiting the ATA's funds due to a decrease in the receipt of membership dues. Financial matters continued to worsen for both organizations when the Community Chest, an organization to which both the NU and ATA held membership, limited their funding to a monthly budget doled out by the Chest.

Further exacerbating the ATA and NU's financial difficulties, the 1929 stock market crash sent a wave of depression across the country. An example of trouble the ATA and the NU faced as a result of this Depression was their inability to institute a black branch for children at Battle Hill Sanatorium, for which both groups had initially pledged support. The creation of this black branch had been a topic of discussion for years, and as a result of the ATA's failure to follow through with helping to bring about its creation, Geikie M. Smith, from Battle Hill, sent a stern letter to Secretary Mary Dickinson of the "Colored" branch of the ATA, asking why it had failed to meet their obligations to create the black branch at the sanatorium. The ATA had previously said its members "were in sympathy with the movement then being put forth by our group to obtain a ward at Battle Hill for colored children," yet made no attempt at cooperation or fundraising, instead focusing on the maintenance of their own organizations, also devastated by the Great Depression.[746] Smith's letter to the ATA described the current state of the nation and charged that the Depression and massive unemployment led to malnourishment among children, increasing the rate of starvation, TB, and other diseases. According to the letter, the condition of children's health had reached desperate straits, with the poor questioning the leadership of the elites, demanding to know their plans to relieve suffering and prevent the deaths of children, who died almost daily.[747] The letter concluded, "It is now impossible as it is wrong to withhold the trust from the people . . . Will you as a[n] executive of the Atlanta Tuberculosis Association

[746] Geikie M. Smith to Miss Mary Dickinson, October 30, 1931, ALAC, Box 19, AHC.
[747] Ibid.

please give the ward project immediate consideration and help the people in the struggle to give relief to colored children now suffering and one by one dying for lack of attention."[748]

Although the ATA and other Community Chest organizations had promised support for the children's ward at Battle Hill Sanatorium, not one of the thirty-eight agencies under the Community Chest participated in working toward its establishment. The need for a branch became especially necessary after the onslaught of the Great Depression, due to increasing poverty rates attributing to the spread of disease, since those seeking work or working more hours for less pay in comparison to the pre-Depression era, had less time to maintain their households and ensure their children's well-being and good health. As children's immune systems had not fully developed, they were more likely to contract disease, receive positive diagnoses, and die at higher rates than adults. The ATA, strapped by its diminished finances and drop in attendance and interest from members, could not effectively join Battle Hill Sanatorium in its efforts for a segregated children's ward. Although information about the other thirty-seven agencies in the Community Chest is unknown, they likely chose to focus on their own programs, as the Depression affected the ability of social agencies to properly function. Despite the lack of support from any of the Community Chest organizations, the "Colored" children's ward at Battle Hill did eventually open. It is unclear, however, when it opened exactly, though a 1941 article in *The Technique* stating that it had a "Colored" children's ward on site shows it was in existence as early as that year.[749]

The most prevailing attack on the NU, leading to the dissolution of the Neighborhood Union's power came through intrusions by the National Urban League, a powerful, male-centered, national organization with great social and political clout, and its influence on the

[748] Ibid.
[749] "Technique Will Sponsor Campaign to Help Tuberculosis Sanatorium," *Technique*, October 10, 1941.

Community Chest's decision to limit the Neighborhood Union to running a pre-school age only clinic in 1927. In this year, the Atlanta Urban League's repeated complaints to the Community Chest that the Neighborhood Union's work overlapped with work done by the Atlanta Urban League and other associations led to the Community Chest's limitation on the NU's active involvement throughout black communities. As a result, the NU was forced to discontinue the rest of its work, including the treatment of adults and non-preschool age children at the Neighborhood Clinic. The Chest's edict stemmed from a multi-decade conflict between the National Urban League and the Neighborhood Union, dating back to before the creation of the Atlanta Branch of the Urban League. Although they strongly cooperated throughout public health campaigns, with both associations having members in the Atlanta Anti-Tuberculosis Association, their relationship always remained fragile, with the Urban League claiming the NU worked as a sub-organization for them.[750]

This assertion dates back to the 1910s, when the National League on Urban Conditions (later the National Urban League), sent an application to the Neighborhood Union requesting affiliation. The NU, however, denied its request. According to historian Cynthia Neverdon-Morton, the Neighborhood Union's reputation had spread beyond Atlanta, and the National League on Urban Conditions tried to adopt the NU into its program in somewhat of an attempt to take credit for its accomplishments, but the NU refused.[751] According to the NU, when the National Urban League later arrived in Atlanta, it again asked to overtake the NU as a sub-organization of the Urban League, with the NU again denying the request, in order to retain its autonomy as an independent organization. Despite their repeated rejections of the Urban

[750] Shivery, "The Neighborhood Union," 159.
[751]Cynthia Neverdon-Morton, *Afro-American Women of the South and the Advancement of the Race, 1895-1925* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1989), 162.

League's advances, the NU did offer the promise of any and all cooperation with the Urban League to improve the lives of black Atlantans.[752] In no way did the Neighborhood Union agree to affiliate with the Urban League as a sub-organization. Not one to give up, the Atlanta Urban League again attempted a takeover in 1925, exacerbating the already tenuous relationship between the two organizations.

Despite the Urban League's claims to the contrary, the Neighborhood Union had existed in Atlanta for over a decade before the entrance of the Urban League to Atlanta, which proves that the Urban League's claims of the NU's work conflicting with its own were unfair and not entirely accurate. In reality, any work performed by the Urban League actually conflicted with the work of the NU, an established institution. One example of this overlapping work involved mother's clubs, which the NU had implemented and run since its inception. The Urban League adopted these types of meetings as well, and claimed them as their own. Although the charges from the Urban League were without real merit, since a national, male-dominated organization with more political influence than the local, female-led NU made these accusations, the Community Chest took their recommendation, resulting in their subsequent limitation on the type of work the NU could perform. Prior to this limitation, the Urban League's complaints even resulted in a temporary loss of funding from the Chest for the NU, with the Chest removing the NU from its fundraising list. After the NU held a massive fundraising campaign to demonstrate its popularity and importance to the city, and after they proved that the Urban League overreacted, funding was reinstated by the Community Chest with the new restrictive clause.[753]

[752] Untitled, List of Accomplishments of the Neighborhood Union, 1925-1926, Atlanta University Presidential Records- John Hope, No Box, AUC.
[753] Neverdon-Morton, *Afro-American Women of the* South, 162.

Even without intrusions by the Atlanta Urban League and Community Chest, women's clubs began to wane on a national level, beginning with the professionalization of social work and the implementation of state and federal programs which overlapped with the work done by clubwomen's associations. This general decline in the efficacy of women's clubs also played a direct role in the Neighborhood Union's decline. According to historian Sarah Judson, the ending of WURC as an active organization illustrates the nationwide trend during this time period of the diminishing influence of women's clubs in a new era, which focused on professionalization and state-sponsored relief programs.[754] Larger organizations, such as the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), the National Urban League, and many state and federal organizations eventually took over much of the work previously spear-headed by the NU and WURC.[755] According to historian Karen Ferguson, the Atlanta branch of the NAACP and the Urban League became so powerful by the 1930s that other social welfare relief programs fell to the wayside, with the city responding only to these national, powerful, male-dominated associations.[756] Consequently, the Neighborhood Union lost its status as liaisons to the white community through the rise of more powerful, male-dominated race-centered organizations. By 1932, formal public welfare agencies, some created for the first time, also started to provide relief work, although many New Deal programs provided no direct benefits for African Americans. Others, such as the Civilian Conservation Corps, had segregated units which gave work to African Americans, and Franklin Delano Roosevelt elected more black cabinet members than any previous president. These new cabinet members worked to provide services for African Americans across the country, and tangible relief, such as working in segregated work units,

[754] Ibid.
[755] Ferguson, *Black Politics*, 144.
[756] Ibid.

directly benefitted African Americans across the United States, including in Atlanta. As a result of these changes in social work services for African Americans, on the eve of the New Deal, WURC represented an antiquated vision for social relief.[757]

Although the Neighborhood Union's influence faced challenges in the 1920s, it continued to work within the confines of its restrictions to benefit as many people as possible. WURC represented the last real foray by the Neighborhood Union into efforts to change the West End of Atlanta until the 1950s. During the course of its existence, the Neighborhood Union changed the shape of the West Side of Atlanta from a run-down section of the city that provided few educational opportunities for black adults and children, to one with mother's clubs, extracurricular activities and vocational courses for children and young adults, municipal services, access to public health, and social services agencies. After the entrance of the NU, the neighborhood dramatically improved both tangibly, through institution building, and intangibly, through behavioral modification. The NU also turned both inward and outward, providing social and municipal services ignored by the city, while also building relationships with white allies, such as white policymakers and the ATA, and using carefully scripted petitions to reach out for public assistance. The NU effectively altered the neighborhood through efforts to improve and amend behaviors, build lasting institutions such as public schools, increase access to health services, and dramatically improve the lives of its residents. Due to the Neighborhood Union's hard work, the West Side neighborhood gained new schools, some (although minimal) municipal services, easier access to public health, the creation of the Atlanta School of Social Work, and, after repeated petitions to the City Council, Washington Park—the first black park in the city, —which offered substantial services to the West End. To attain these goals, the Neighborhood

[757] Ibid.

Union focused on two central goals to bring about change: improving home life for mothers and children and spreading preventative education to the community, especially children, to stop social and physical maladies before they occurred.

To accomplish these ends, Neighborhood Union members acted as both mothers to their own children and mothers to the race as a whole. Never abandoning their commitment to black society's children, mothers, and future citizens, NU members played a special role in helping children learn the skills necessary for citizenship. While serving as the backbone of their community through their work with the NU, these women remained responsible for domestic activities and child-rearing, balancing their roles in these two worlds. While the Neighborhood Union emphasized the importance of female-centered events, they worked to secure better lives for all African American children, ones where children would grow up possessing the skills necessary to effectively combat segregation and white supremacy. Working within the white male patriarchal system, navigating through a reluctant city government, and adhering to racial constraints, allowed the NU to carry on its work with little supervision from whites until its inclusion into the Community Chest, a white-led organization. The Neighborhood Union also educated teachers via direct involvement in the classroom, by either volunteering the services of members or union-associated health professionals, with the goal of helping teachers meet their responsibilities of helping to ensure the well-beings and proper educations of children in the school system.

The most effective strategy of the Neighborhood Union involved instilling preventative educative activities into every avenue of its program. The organization believed in resolving a conflict before it began and used preventative education as its most effective weapon in combatting a number of social evils, including vice, crime, and disease. Always a central part of

its program, the Neighborhood Union used the concept of preventative education to achieve racial and gendered uplift; NU members also used this strategy in their dealings with the public school system, the movement for public health, and combatting the Great Depression. The NU knew that the best way to reach the masses involved teaching people how to recognize, attack, and discontinue social, educational, and health maladies in their homes, schools, and communities.

These strategies remained primary focuses of the NU from the inception to the dissolution of the program. While the Neighborhood Union attempted to improve the neighborhood through community building, it never envisioned the overwhelming successes and improvements that its efforts would bring to the neighborhood. Because of the Neighborhood Union, children had places to play and healthful educative outlets, the public school system, while remaining dangerously overcrowded, saw tangible gains, and thousands of residents received lessons and lectures on preventing, treating, and curing communicable diseases. Although WURC did not obtain the success the founders envisioned, it represented another avenue through which the Neighborhood Union turned inward, attacking problems in the community without the assistance from the city government. The Neighborhood Union's activism continued into the 1950s, when it cooperated with the county to form the Neighborhood Union Health Center, which still operates today in the twenty-first century.

Epilogue

The Neighborhood Union (NU), although never again wielding the same level of power it held prior to the dissolution of the West Side Unemployment Relief Committee (WURC), continued to serve its community for decades. The NU ended 1932 with another political battle and commemorating the organization's accomplishments with a twenty-fifth anniversary celebration in 1933. As years passed, the NU never lost its commitment to making the neighborhood better for its residents. In later years, the organization focused primarily on mother and youth-oriented clubs and health clinic work. In the 1950s, the NU solidified its future legacy when it cooperated with the Fulton County Board of Health to found the Neighborhood Union Health Center. NU members' dedication to their cause is exemplified by the organization's work ending only when its members became physically unable to continue, due to old age and even death.

The NU fought for their program using several avenues, including political ones, such as its work during a 1932 special election to prevent the attempted recall of Mayor James Key.[758] Many white Atlantans demanded his recall because Mayor Key publicly spoke against prohibition, stating that it created criminals and he favored an end to anti-liquor laws. This incensed the press in Atlanta, and people quickly took sides either supporting or opposing Key. As a result, businessman John A. Manget organized a popular election supporting the recall of the mayor.[759] Filed by J. Henson Tatum, Clerk of Council, and sent to the City Council, he "filed petitions in the office of the Clerk of Council on Monday, February 15th, 1932. . . for the recall of Mayor James L. Key. . . twenty-five percent in number of the registered voters as disclosed by

[758] Neighborhood Union Works to Prevent the Attempted Recall of Mayor Key, 1932, Neighborhood Union Collection (hereafter referred to as NUC), Box 6, Atlanta University Center, (hereafter referred to as AUC).
[759] Ibid.

the registration sheets of the last general municipal election have registered in petitions . . . that an election be called upon the subject of the recall of Mayor James L. Key."[760] The election, scheduled for March 15, 1932, allowed individuals to register until the day of the vote.[761]

The NU and the women's auxiliary of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), also headed by Lugenia Hope, worked to prevent Key's recall. They supported him because of his fair treatment of African Americans during the last bond campaign, keeping his promise to aid black schools.[762] According to historian Ronald H. Bayor, he served as mayor when the decision to build Booker T. Washington High School had been approved.[763] Moreover, he designated funds for black public schools and helped the black community even further by helping the NU with landscape grading of its property, assisting in the formation of Washington Park, creating a black library, and requesting street improvements for black neighborhoods.[764] Specifically, on February 24, 1932, the NU asked the mayor for free landscaping assistance from the city to grade their property and to build a retaining wall.[765] According to Shivery, long time NU secretary and historian, the mayor approved, and construction began in the spring. He also supported NU fundraisers, including the 1931 NU/WURC carnival for which he allowed the closing of streets and provided police protection, something no other mayor had provided for the NU. This involvement made Mayor Key the most progressive mayor to date in aiding and assisting the black community, securing him the support of the black community during the recall election. To help Key maintain his position as

[760] J. Henson Tatum, *Petitions for Recall of Mayor Key,* Atlanta City Council Records, Vol. 33, 1932, 113.
[761] Alderman Millican, Atlanta City Council Records, Vol. 33, 1932, 112.
[762] Neighborhood Union Works to Prevent the Attempted Recall of Mayor Key, 1932, NUC, Box 6, AUC.
[763] Ronald H. Bayor, *Race and the Shaping of Twentieth Century Atlanta* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996), 17.
[764] Ibid.
[765] Letter to Mayor Key and City Council, 1932, NUC, Box 3, AUC.

mayor, the NU and NAACP organized a massive voter registration drive and created Citizenship Schools to teach African Americans the power of voting, how to register, and how politics functioned.[766] These Citizenship Schools bore similarity to the Freedom Schools of the 1960s where African Americans and white college students learned about politics, registering, and other nonviolent tactics.[767] Organizing this work was important to beating the recall election, since African Americans could vote in special elections and could carry some weight regarding the results.

A tabulation of registered voters as of March 12, 1932, presented to the council on March 14, showed 20,973 registered white voters and 344 registered African Americans.[768] On March 12, however, a voter drive, targeted at both the black and white communities, added 103 African Americans and 2,421 white additional voters.[769] After this date, a surge in African American voter registration occurred, and although the exact number of new registrants from March 12–March 15 is unknown, the climb in numbers suggests a massive voter registration drive must have taken place, as historian Ronald H. Bayor declared that a total of 2,500 new black voters registered for the recall election.[770] Although not everyone voted, the final election count for the First and Fourth Wards, predominantly African American, showed 91 for and 454 against in the First Ward and 458 for and 1,591 against in the Fourth Ward. In this election, African-Americans exerted their voting power to help a man whom had helped them in the past and present. The outcome of this election demonstrates that blacks could carry some political weight, as did the 1921 bond campaign.

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[766] Sarah Mercer Judson, "Building the New South City: African-American and White Clubwomen in Atlanta, 1895-1930." (PhD diss., New York University, 1997), 392-3.
[767] Adam Fairclough, *Better Day Coming: Blacks and Equality, 1890-2000* (New York: Penguin Books, 2001), 285.
[768] *List of Registered Voters*, Atlanta City Council Records, Vol. 33, 135-6.
[769] Ibid.
[770] Bayor, *Race and the Shaping of Twentieth Century Atlanta*, 19.

The following year, the Neighborhood Union celebrated its many accomplishments. From July 8–11, 1933, the NU held a grand celebration for their twenty-fifth anniversary. The celebration included a pageant which dramatically portrayed the "History, Growth, and Outcome" of the NU for twenty-five years. The portrayal featured a blending of dances and the reenactment and interpretation of various phases of development of the NU."[771] W.E.B. DuBois, former Atlanta University faculty member and prominent member of the national NAACP, created the pageant's theme. Located in New York, it is possible Dubois returned for the sole purpose of this celebration, as he had a personal relationship with Lugenia Hope for decades. Louie Shivery provided the history, with Ethlynne Holmes in charge of carrying out the pageant.[772] The pageant documented activities carried out by the organization, its achievements, and the history of the NU during the past twenty-five years. It separated the program into five phases of NU Activity: "1908-1913, The Spirit of the NU; New Appeal 1914–1918; 1919–1923, Relief and Clean-up Campaigns; 1924–1928, integrated the YMCA and YWCA; and 1929–1933, Carnival, Soup Kitchen, Clinic."[773] Many of these achievements did not take place just in the referenced timeframes. For example, the NU regularly held carnivals starting in 1912, though its largest carnival took place in 1931 and raised the most money used to address the needs of the community. Additionally, clean-up campaigns pre-dated 1919, beginning as early (although far more disorganized) as 1909.[774]

On the second day of its celebration, Sunday, July 9, it held a mass meeting with different speakers detailing the history of the organization to highlight and honor the achievements of the

[771] L.D. Shivery, "Twenty Fifth Anniversary of the Neighborhood Union," 1933, NUC, Box 2, AUC.
[772] Ibid.
[773] General Scheme of the Pageant Commemorating the Twenty-Fifth Anniversary of the Founding of the Neighborhood Union, 1933 NUC, Box 2, AUC
[774] Ibid.

NU over the last twenty-five years. Many of these speakers worked with the Neighborhood Union for years or even decades, including Ludie Andrews, NU member since 1913.[775] Events celebrating the anniversary continued, with a health play taking place at the Neighborhood Clinic on Monday, after the close of regular clinic hours.[776] Holding the play after hours shows the NU's commitment to helping children, and that not even commemorating an achievement as massive as this twenty-fifth anniversary celebration could make them abandon its work to help the community, even if just temporarily. Additionally, from the start of the event until Tuesday, July 11, the center hosted an exhibition featuring posters detailing the NU's various activities and accomplishments, including, but not limited to: Health Clinics, Child Welfare Activities, Better Schools and Homes, Red Cross, School Activities, School Survey, Negro Women's Division of the Commission of Interracial Cooperation, the Atlanta School of Social Work, Y.W.C.A. activities, WURC, Surveying, and World War I activity. The list continued, and it appeared the exhibit displayed every single one of the NU's accomplishments in assisting the community, city, and others during the preceding twenty-five years.[777]

Finally, on the evening of July 11, the NU closed its four day anniversary celebration with a testimonial dinner where various members of the NU praised Lugenia Hope for her unwavering dedication to the organization. A Mrs. Stanton stated that she had had the honor of working with Hope for twelve years, and that Hope helped "instill a certain degree of civic pride, should make the people in this community, and every community in this city believe that they were 'masters of their fate and captains of their souls.'"[778] A Mrs. Brittain gave a moving speech in which she stated that Hope had been a friend to the whole community and that "she has been a

[775] Louie Davis Shivery, "Twenty Fifth Anniversary of the Neighborhood Union," 1933, NUC, Box 2, AUC.
[776] "Twenty Five Years Old Today," *Atlanta World*, July 8, 1933.
[777] Appendix, Anniversary Committee, NUC, Box 6, AUC.
[778] Speech by Mrs. Stanton, July 11, 1933, Atlanta University Presidential Records- John Hope, Box 135, AUC.

friend to all whom she has touched directly as social worker and in other lines. We have found that the influence she has spread among us has never died."[779] Along with her praise of Hope as a friend to the community, Mrs. Brittain highlighted several of Hope's achievements, including her public school survey successes, the bond campaign, and the teaching of health classes in public schools. Several other women gave speeches at the dinner, honoring Hope and her dedication to the community and children.

Lugenia Hope gave the dinner's closing address, first thanking everyone for their kind words and coming together for the occasion. She stated, "I want to pay tribute to the men and women who have stood by the organization all through the 25 years. We have here at the table friends who have stood by us."[780] She credited W.E.B. DuBois and Gertrude Ware for her entry into Atlanta social work when they "forced me into kindergarten work."[781] She concluded her stirring speech, "And if we have done anything for the community and the people, we are the ones who are blessed, because it is a great blessing to serve. I feel that we have been more than paid by our good friends by all they have done . . . but I just want you to know that I appreciate all that has been done. Thank you."[782] Ending with a speech by founder Lugenia Hope seemed fitting for the occasion, as the NU would never have endured for twenty-five years without her dedication. Two years later, Lugenia Hope's leadership with the Neighborhood Union came to an end. On the NU's twenty-seventh anniversary, she announced her resignation as the organization's Chairman of the Board of Directors. Despite resigning her leadership role, Hope did, however, remain associated with the NU until she moved out of state in 1937.

[779] Speech by Mrs. Brittain, July 11, 1933, Atlanta University Presidential Records-John Hope, Box 135, AUC.
[780] Speech by Mrs. Hope, July 11, 1933, Atlanta University Presidential Records-John Hope, Box 135, AUC.
[781] Ibid.
[782] Ibid.

The Neighborhood Union's role in the black community transformed in the early 1930s, with the organization stepping back from its role as leaders. Though no longer a driving force in black Atlanta, the NU continued to hold regular meetings, with its members serving their community in lesser capacities, through activities associated with public health and social clubs. The NU remained involved with the Community Chest well into the 1950s. At some point, it dropped the pre-school age only restriction and, in 1944, the West Side Health Center, serving all members and ages, opened on NU property. This clinic opened due to the lack of medical services available to African Americans, and by 1951 the clinic had "a staff of twenty-one (21) persons, nurses, physicians, dentists, and caretakers [and] served over fifteen-thousand three hundred and twenty (15,320) people."[783] By 1952, the number of individuals served nearly tripled to 42,000.[784] The clinic offered various treatments, including treatment for venereal diseases, maternal care, ring worm treatment, dental care, and tuberculosis treatment; the clinic also held child health conferences. The NU found that its clinic could not meet the needs of such a large community, and requested the county to take over the work of the West Side Health Center.

The NU originally designed its health center to serve a much smaller population with the intent of operating as a venereal disease clinic. Due to patient demand, the West Side Health Center expanded its services to meet the needs of the community, though the building itself did not undergo renovation. With the massive increase in population (likely due to the Second Great Migration which occurred during and immediately following World War II or the postwar baby boom) needing services, the health center could no longer adequately address the needs of

[783] Letter from the Neighborhood Union to the Fulton County Board of Health, May 28, 1952, NUC, Box 5, AUC.
[784] Ibid.

African Americans in the community. As a result, the Neighborhood Union contacted the Fulton County Board of Health and requested a new, county-run health center on its property, large enough to meet the needs of the West End.[785] In line with gender constructions of the time where it was inappropriate for women to make such requests, the Neighborhood Union did not submit the letter itself; instead, it had men of stature submit the request in the organization's stead. These men included: Dr. Raymond H. Carter (Chairman of the Atlanta Health Council), Attorney Austin T. Walden (Co-Chairman of the Atlanta Negro Voters League, former President of the Atlanta branch of the NAACP, and long-time Neighborhood Union affiliate), and Dr. J.B. Harris (President of the Atlanta Medical Association).[786] Having prominent men in the community submit this request shows NU members' submission to gender hierarchies of the time, in which men held most organizational and leadership positions, and also demonstrates that the NU likely believed its request would be taken more seriously if made by leading, health organization-affiliated, prominent men of Atlanta sign and send the letter.[787]

By 1952, the NU took the necessary steps to begin discussion with the Fulton County Board of Health about the construction of a new, county-run health center on its property. Members of the Neighborhood Union wrote a letter to the Fulton County Board of Health, and in response, the Board of Health approached the Neighborhood Union about the construction of a health center on their land located at 186 Sunset Avenue.[788] In May 1952, Roy McGhee and James Hackney from the Board of Health asked to build the county-run clinic on Neighborhood

[785] Ibid.
[786] Ibid.
[787] Susan Smith, *Sick and Tired of Being Sick and Tired: Black Women's Health Activism in America* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1995), 1.
[788] Minutes, June 10, 1952, NUC, Box 5, AUC.

Union-owned land, requesting the NU donate this land to the county so that the county could take over the health work the Neighborhood Union had started.[789]

The women of the Neighborhood Union labored over the decision regarding whether to donate the West Side Health Center land and property to the county. A number of women, some affiliated with the NU for decades, met to discuss the matter. Hattie Watson, the only living founding member of the NU who signed the organization's request for incorporation in 1911, attended this meeting. Along with Watson, who served as the NU's first secretary, a number of other women with records of long standing service to the Neighborhood Union came to the meeting. Both Louie Shivery, longtime secretary and NU historian, and Ludie Andrews attended, both prominent members of the Neighborhood Union since 1913. According to the meeting minutes for this gathering, "Mrs. Andrews stated that for several years it had been impossible to have a large number of members present at the meetings and that she thought it would be a very sensible thing to transfer the land and Center to the City to be used for a most worthy cause as was outlined in detail."[790] Additional members expressing their opinions included President Daisy Yancey, Carrie Connolly, who previously served as President of the NU after the resignation of Lugenia Hope, longtime member Gertrude Tatnall, and a Mrs. Henry Shorter, wife of an NU clinic doctor. Many of these women volunteered for the Neighborhood Union for at least twenty years, with some working for the organization for several decades.

After several weeks of discussion and negotiation with the Fulton County Board of Health, the Neighborhood Union voted 9–1 to donate the majority of its property to the county,

[789] Ibid.
[790] Minutes, November 18, 1952, NUC, Box 5, AUC.

with a few stipulations.[791] One of these stipulations included the NU retaining ownership of a sixty-six by two hundred and forty-five feet plot of property that fronted Sunset Avenue and ran along the west side of the property[792] Never one to submit to other organizations, the Neighborhood Union specified that it would keep this property for its own use, with the rest of the property donated to the county. There, the Neighborhood Union could still conduct its activities and maintain a level of autonomy from the county. The NU's offer to donate its property to the county also held several other provisions. NU members requested that the new center cost at least $100,000–150,000, guaranteeing a large and effective center to meet the demands of such a high population. Also, the Neighborhood Union requested that the health center's name be the Neighborhood Union Health Center because "the Union will not lose its identity."[793] Moreover, the women requested the placement of a bronze plaque at the front of the building to honor the women who worked to secure the center. Finally, the club members requested that the county "pledge in the contract unrestricted use and participation of Negro people in all of its activities (and agree that violation of this section will nullify this deed that is given solely to perpetuate the activities for which the NU was chartered)."[794] The NU agreed, after the Board of Health objected, to delete the restrictive clause (the county pledge), but maintained the necessity of the first three demands; upon the county's agreement to these stipulations, the NU finalized their decision to donate the clinic land and building.

The women of the Neighborhood Union sought the creation of this public health center because "we women were influenced in donating this grant because health is one of the main

[791] Letter to Dr. Roy McGhee and Director of the Fulton County Health Department, and Dr. James Hackney, City Health Department, from the Neighborhood Union, June 30, 1952, NUC, Box 5, AUC.
[792] Ibid.
[793] Ibid.
[794] Letter to Roy McGhee and James Hackney, representing the Fulton County Board of Health, from the Neighborhood Union Organization in Session, 1952, NUC Box 5, AUC.

objectives of our Charter."[795] The Neighborhood Union also never forgot the tireless dedication of Lugenia Hope, who died in 1947. They sought to spread her message and have the new health center forever serve as a reminder of her dream. Neighborhood Union members claimed, **"**This organization was founded by Mrs. John Hope, on the basis of Health and community betterment, and we take this step that her vision may be perpetuated."[796] According to Louie Shivery, public health was always central to the organization, but aging NU members could no longer keep up with the work. By the 1950s, the organization had greatly diminished in influence, with most of the women having reached old age or passed away. For example, Ludie Andrews served until the age of 85. The establishment of the public health center enabled these women to have their message carry on in the community through the Fulton County Public Health Department, which possessed better capabilities and funding for the maintenance of the center.[797]

The Neighborhood Union's agreement to donate the land once again demonstrates the organization's history of altruism. This history began with the opening of its first health center in 1908, only a few months after the founding of the Neighborhood Union. It is again demonstrated through its decades of work with the Atlanta Anti-Tuberculosis Association, its sponsoring of clean-up campaigns, and participation in National Negro Health Week. The Neighborhood Union, in all of its objectives, obtained the most success and had the most far-reaching impact via the provision of public health measures and preventative education. Though altruistic at heart, the Neighborhood Union, however, also wanted credit for its hard work and dedication, as evidenced by their stipulation requiring a plaque honoring the organization at the county's public health center. The members wanted to commemorate the Neighborhood Union and Lugenia

[795] Ibid.
[796] Ibid.
[797] Minutes, June 10, 1952, NUC, Box 5, AUC.

Hope's message by having a permanent center, where all could remember the association. Financial constraints served as an additional motivation for the organization ceding its land and clinic to the county, as the women, strapped by finances, thought this decision would keep the NU alive. According to meeting minutes, "It was heartily agreed that members continue to keep the NU work going as far as possible in what ever way we can."[798] It is unknown exactly when the Neighborhood Union Health Center opened its doors, as many records are missing from the 1950s, but it opened by at least March 1955, as evidenced by a meeting minutes record for the Neighborhood Union held during that month at the Neighborhood Union Health Center.[799]

The last noted record for the Neighborhood Union is a postcard asking members to come to an important business meeting on July 26, 1961.[800] Two copies are available for review and identical in content, one does not list an addressee or signee, while the other is from President Daisy Yancey to Louie Shivery. This business meeting likely focused on the sale of NU property, since the organization's last-known meeting minutes from July 1961 discuss options regarding taxes and the sale of property, demonstrating how the NU may have endured additional financial hardships.[801] Initially, one wonders why the Neighborhood Union's records abruptly end in July 1961. The answer probably lies with the fate of Louie Shivery, who joined the Neighborhood Union in 1913, serving off and on as its long time secretary, and her October 9, 1961 death. Shivery worked determinedly to save and document the Neighborhood Union's story. She collected and preserved the data, and wrote her Master's Thesis on the NU (with W.E.B. Dubois as her advisor) in the 1930s. It appears that either the organization did not survive her passing, or that it did but with record maintenance ceasing with her death. Louie

[798] Minutes, November 17, 1953, NUC Box 5, AUC.
[799] Minutes, March 15, 1955, NUC Box 5, AUC.
[800] Postcard, Mrs. Daisy Yancey to Mrs. L.D. Shivery, n.d. , NUC, Box 5, AUC.
[801] Minutes, July 1961, NUC, Box 5, AUC.

Shivery's contributions to the Neighborhood Union are monumental, and this examination of the Neighborhood Union could not have occurred without her unyielding dedication and meticulous record keeping.

Shivery's dedication to the NU is evident in a letter addressed to Daisy Yancey, dated October 27, 1952, in which she requested to keep her position as secretary while temporarily working at Florida Normal College in St. Augustine, Florida, even though distance limited her ability to stay fully involved in the organization. Shivery claimed, "I have served the NU with all I have, and I think it owes it to me to re-elect me Secretary until all of this is completed. It would be a shame to have another take up now when I have suffered so much. I have been loyal to principles, the organization, you, my President, and to Mr. Yancey, who has been faithful and loyal."[802] Her letter concluded with a vow to stay with the organization until its end.[803] As a result, she kept her official position as secretary, while someone else served as interim secretary during her absence.

Like Louie Shivery, Ludie Andrews is another longtime member who joined the Union in 1913. Andrews served as the first registered black nurse in the state of Georgia, and although the exact date is unknown, the earliest records of her nursing career begin in 1907.[804] In addition to her nursing duties, Andrews frequently served as a matron at Spelman Seminary (College), due to being widowed at an early age.[805] After becoming a member, Andrews became indispensable

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[802] Letter to Daisey Yancey from Louie D. Shivery, October 27, 1952, NUC, Box 5, AUC.
[803] Ibid.
[804] Ancestry. *U.S. City Directories, 1821-1939*, Ancestry.com, http://search.ancestry.com/cgi-bin/sse.dll?rank=1&new=1&MSAV=1&msT=1&gss=angs-g&gsfn=ludie&gsfn_x=XO&gsln=andrews&gsln_x=XO&msbdy=1875&gskw=atlanta&_83004002=black&cpxt=0&catBucket=rstp&uidh=vr6&msbdp=5&_83004003-n_xcl=m&cp=12&pcat=ROOT_CATEGORY&h=694535632&db=USDirectories&indiv=1&ml_rpos=12 [Accessed December 1, 2013]
[805] Ancestry, "1910 United States Federal Census," Ancestry.com, http://search.ancestry.com/cgibin/sse.dll?rank=1&new=1&MSAV=1&msT=1&gss=angsg&gsfn=ludie&gsfn_x=XO&gsln=andrews&gsln_x=XO&msypn__ftp=atlanta&_83004002=black&cpxt=0&catBucket=rstp&uidh=vr6&_8300

to the Neighborhood Union, to which she offered her health services and free nursing, volunteering her time at the Neighborhood Clinic, holding membership in the ATA, and teaching Red Cross Certification Courses. She worked with the Neighborhood Union for decades, until at least the end of its record keeping in 1961. A determined worker, she served on committees and served in a leadership role for the NU throughout her tenure. The Neighborhood Union could not have effectively functioned without the indefatigable dedication of women like Andrews, who died in 1969, at the age of ninety-four.[806]

Another member, Hattie Watson, one of the founding members of the Neighborhood Union and its first secretary, remained involved in the organization long enough to vote on the construction of the Neighborhood Union Health Center. During the voting process, she represented the only living founding member of the association, marking forty-four years of service with the NU. Her husband worked as a porter, which afforded her lower middle-class status, putting her in the class of women who held membership in the NU. Although the date of her death is unknown, records show her as still alive in 1956 and still living in her home on Lee Street, near many local colleges, where she lived for decades.[807]

Lugenia Hope, as original Union president and determined community advocate, dedicated herself to the Neighborhood Union for nearly three decades. She brought substantial changes to both the West End and other black neighborhoods. Her unyielding dedication to the

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4003-n_xcl=m&cp=12&pcat=ROOT_CATEGORY&h=3489582&db=1910USCenIndex&indiv=1&ml_rpos=17 [accessed December 1, 2013]

[806] Ancestry: U.S. Social Security Death Index, 1935-Current, http://search.ancestry.com/cgi-bin/sse.dll?rank=1&new=1&MSAV=1&msT=1&gss=angs-g&gsfn=ludie&gsln=andrews&gskw=atlanta&cpxt=0&catBucket=rstp&uidh=vr6&cp=12&pcat=ROOT_CATEGORY&h=1375320&recoff=9+10&db=ssdi&indiv=1&ml_rpos=18, [accessed February 3, 2014]

[807] Ancestry: U.S. City Directories, 1821-1989, http://search.ancestry.com/cgi-bin/sse.dll?rank=1&new=1&MSAV=1&msT=1&gss=angs-g&gsfn=hattie+r&gsln=watson&gskw=atlanta&_83004002=black&cpxt=0&catBucket=rstp&uidh=vr6&_83004003n_xcl=m&cp=12&mssng0=george&mssns0=watson&pcat=ROOT_CATEGORY&h=1337028090&db=USDirectories&indiv=1&ml_rpos=13 [accessed February 3, 2014]

movement and forming its organizational structure and supervising activities, allowed the NU to survive for years, even after her resignation. After her resignation in 1935 from the Board of Directors, she remained involved in the Neighborhood Union in more indirect ways until her husband, John Hope, died from pneumonia the following year on February 20, 1936.[808] By 1937 she moved to Harlem, but soon after she moved back and forth between her two sons' homes, one in Nashville and the other in Washington D.C.[809] She died in Nashville of heart failure on August 14, 1947 at the age of seventy-six.[810] Her ashes are spread at Morehouse College in Atlanta.[811]

The Neighborhood Union's legacy still endures, with the continued operations of the Neighborhood Union Health Center. Still open today, it closed for a number of years for renovations, but reopened on December 1, 2008.[812] In 2011, the City of Atlanta voted to make the street where the Neighborhood Union Health Center is located (also the location of Martin Luther King Jr.'s former home) an historic district called the Sunset Avenue Historic District.[813] Many other homes in this neighborhood once housed other civil rights activists of the 1960s, including former Atlanta Mayor Maynard Jackson and former Georgia State Legislature member and chairman of the NAACP from 1998 to 2010, Julian Bond.[814] Creating an historic district

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[808] Jacqueline Rouse, *Lugenia Burns Hope: Black Southern Reformer* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1989), 127.
[809] Ibid.
[810] Ibid.; Ancestry: Tennessee, Death and Burials Index, 1874-1955, http://search.ancestry.com/cgi-bin/sse.dll?rank=1&new=1&MSAV=1&msT=1&gss=angs-&gsfn=hattie+r&gsln=watson&gskw=atlanta&_83004002=black&cpxt=0&catBucket=rstp&uidh=vr6&_83004003-n_xcl=m&cp=12&mssng0=george&mssns0=watson&pcat=ROOT_CATEGORY&h=1337028090&db=USDirectories&indiv=1&ml_rpos=13 [accessed February 3, 2014]
[811] Rouse, *Lugenia Burns Hope,* 127
[812] *The Historic Westside*, (Issue 1, Oct/Nov, 2008), http://www.sistersactionteam.com/upload/HWS%201.pdf, [accessed September 1, 2015].
[813] David Pendered, "Martin Luther King Jr.'s home and its street to receive historic designation from Atlanta," May 1, 2011, http://saportareport.com/blog/2011/05/martin-luther-king-jr-s-home-and-its-street-to-receive-historic-designation/, [accessed February 2, 2014]
[814] Ibid.

around the Neighborhood Union Health Center protected the region from intrusion and alteration, preserving the history of the storied neighborhood. According to journalist David Pendered, "Atlanta's program of historic districts aims to protect the nature of significant communities. Once designated, property owners in historic districts who want to make substantial changes to structures must get approval from the board that oversees the Urban Design Commission."[815]

The Neighborhood Union left an indelible mark on the country and its accomplishments are still seen throughout the West Side neighborhood of Atlanta. A quick tour of the location surrounding the Atlanta University Center shows that Washington Park, which the NU assisted in establishing, is still open today at 1125 Lena Street, North West. Additionally, the NU's work to build new schools lives on today, with Booker T. Washington High School's continued use as a publicly run high school serving the West Side neighborhood. The Atlanta School of Social Work, which the Neighborhood Union played a direct role in founding, is now the Whitney M. Young School of Social Work at Clark Atlanta University. Finally, and perhaps most significantly, the Neighborhood Union Health Center, which stands at 186 Sunset Avenue and continues to provide health care on the West Side of Atlanta, shows the enduring legacy of the Neighborhood Union in Atlanta's West Side. Due to its hard work and persistence, the Neighborhood Union's legacy is evident in the West Side, all achieved in the name of improving education, finding healthful places for children to play, and establishing a public health center, which demonstrate the NU's dedication to the community. The Neighborhood Union created a legacy from which the city of Atlanta still benefits today, all brought about by women who, in

[815] Ibid.

defiance of the traditional racial and gender roles of their time, tirelessly worked and dedicated their lives to the uplift and improvement of their communities.

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